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disques

FOR FEBRUARY 1932

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RICHARD J. MAGRUDER, EDITOR EDWARD C. SMITH, ART EDITOR



VOLUME II of *Disques* is completed with this issue. It cannot truthfully be said that the period covered by the past eleven issues was by any means an extraordinary one in the phonograph industry, nor was any appreciable progress made. It was an interesting period, and at times an exciting one. But in most cases the things that at first seemed exciting subsequently turned out to be pretty mild. No great advances were made on the mechanical side—none that were made public, at any rate. The long - playing process, brought out last Fall, still remains unsatisfactory to the serious collector, though it suggests fine possibilities for the future. No remarkable improvements in recording were noted. Excellent reproduction can be obtained from modern records, but substantially the same reproduction could be obtained last year, and in fact the year before that, too. But the various releases unquestionably maintained a higher standard of excellence (mechanical excellence) than in previous years. The average record issued, regardless of the quality of the music or of the interpretation, was undeniably well recorded. This would seem to indicate that the recording engineers have at last mas-

tered their difficult art—at its present state of development—about as well as they possibly can be expected to. In consequence, it seems safe to assume that before we can expect any substantial improvement in reproduction some drastic changes will have to be made either in the method of recording or in the method of reproducing records, or possibly in both. It hardly seems likely that much more can be done with discs recorded and reproduced by present methods than has already been done. Nearly every record issued by the major companies these days is capable of yielding eminently satisfactory reproduction. Now and then, of course, an inferior disc pops up, but it is generally found, on examination and investigation, that the actual recording was done sometime ago. Records made during the past year or two can usually be depended upon to give a generous portion of the music that the musicians endeavored to put into it, and with a commendable degree of accuracy and balance. Good recording used to be regarded as a sort of accident; now when an accident occurs, it commonly results in bad recording. This is assuredly a decided gain.

Business, naturally, was bad during the past year, but if the sales of records were smaller than in previous years, that can be ascribed to reasons other than lack of interest. Interest, indeed, continued unabated, and if anything it increased. Considering the fact that collectors' patiences have been sorely tried of late, this is all the more gratifying. The number of releases, though somewhat smaller than in previous years (with which, remembering the circumstances, it would be hard to cavil), was amply sufficient to take care of the demand. Duplications, of course, figured conspicuously in the supplements. Some of these duplications, because of superior interpretation and vastly improved recording, were genuinely welcome, replacing, as they did, sets that were played solely because they happened to be the only versions available of the music. There were others, of course, that scarcely seemed worth while releasing. But the quantity of the latter was not large enough to justify much criticism. These things, while lamentable, are more or less unavoidable, and as long as they do not become excessively frequent it is useless to waste time complaining and getting indignant. Some exceptionally interesting works found their way onto records during the period covered by the past eleven issues of *Disques*. But it cannot reasonably be claimed that they were intrinsically any more interesting—at least from a musical standpoint—than those issued during the previous year. That would surely be stretching the facts. Contemporary music, as usual, did not fare any too well, though it was certainly treated as politely and as generously as it was in former years. The companies still approach modern music with exemplary, if rather irritating, caution, and no doubt their reasons for such a policy are sufficiently cogent. Nonetheless, though, there were some extremely fine examples of modern music issued during the past year. Glancing through the back issues of *Disques*, one finds listed such works as Stravinsky's *Symphonie de Psaumes*, his *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, Elgar's *First Symphony*, his *'Cello Concerto* and his *Enigma Variations*, Sibelius' *En Saga* and his *Swan of Tuonela*, Falla's *Harpsichord Concerto*, his *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and his *El Amor Brujo*. Several of these works had been recorded before, but the majority of them had not, and those that were duplications were sufficiently well done to justify the repetition. These discs, of course, do not represent the complete list of recordings of modern music issued during the past year; they represent only a few of the more important examples. The older music, too, was by no means neglected. Fine recordings appeared of the *Prelude and Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde* (the first thoroughly satisfactory recordings of this music that have yet been made), an almost complete version of *Tannhäuser* done at the Bayreuth Festival of 1930, the Moussorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Borodin's *Second Symphony*, Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 3*, the Franck *Symphony*, Brahms' *Fourth Symphony*, his *Academic Festival Overture*, various Beethoven symphonies, his *Leonore No. 3 Overture*, the *Rosenkavalier Waltzes*, the *Siegfried Idyl* . . . But the list could be extended, if not indefinitely, at least for a couple of pages; at all events, the index to Volume II will be out within a few weeks, and the complete list can be found there.



The most sensational development in the past twelve months, of course, was the announcement of the long-playing records last Fall. This matter has been dealt

with at length in these columns, and so it will not be necessary to say much more about it here. The program transcriptions have fine potentialities, but as yet they have not been fully realized, and probably it will require a longer time than at first seemed necessary. Satisfactory equipment for adapting old type machines to play the long-playing records, though announced, has not yet been issued. The recording in the program transcriptions that have thus far been made available has been, on the whole, distinctly disappointing. Last month we printed a few of the representative letters from our readers on the subject, and the general opinion expressed by them, as well as by many correspondents whose letters we hadn't the space to publish, was that the standard records are still to be preferred to the program transcriptions, whose only advantage—*i. e.*, that of presenting the music without annoying and unnatural interruptions—is not sufficient to offset their various other flaws. Elsewhere in this issue—in the Correspondence Column—is published a statement regarding the long-playing records by the president of the Columbia Phonograph Company. Columbia, it appears, is developing a long-playing record, but the company does not believe that the standard record will be replaced for some years to come, and so it is planning its future course accordingly.



Last May we ventured to suggest in this place that one of the main reasons accounting for the phonograph's not being so popular in America as it is in Europe is that over here records are not given so much publicity as they are in Europe. In Europe nearly all good newspapers review records; so do most good European musical journals. Over here very few newspapers are even aware of the existence of records, and not many magazines notice them. That this unquestionably is one of the principal obstacles in the way of popularizing the phonograph to any large extent still seems perfectly logical to us, and therefore it is depressing to note that no visible progress was made in this matter during the past year. So far as we are aware, indeed, no more record reviews are printed in America today than were printed a year ago; and some that appeared fairly frequently last year seem to have disappeared altogether today. Where, for example, are Lawrence Gilman's reviews in the *Sunday Herald Tribune*? Last year one could count on reading his opinions of late releases every couple of weeks, but for the last few months his columns have ignored records completely. Is this accident or design? Whatever it is, in any event, it is not at all encouraging.



However, conditions are surely no worse than they were this time a year ago, and indeed they may be a great deal better. As was mentioned above, interest appears to be as strong as ever, and one proof of this can be found in *Disques'* greatly increased subscription list. This year, too, the phonograph industry has more to work on than it did last year. There is the long-playing record to be improved, for example, and no doubt there are other things in the laboratories that, when perfected, will make listening to records a much more profitable and pleasurable enterprise. *Disques* therefore contemplates the task of preparing the next twelve issues with pleasure and a fair amount of confidence. Suggestions for improving the next volume will be gratefully received and carefully considered.

According to a recent announcement, negotiations have been completed whereby the Grigsby-Grunow Company, Chicago, manufacturers of Majestic radios and refrigerators, has acquired control of the Columbia Phonograph Company, Inc., New York. This will give practical control of Columbia in North and South America to the Grigsby-Grunow Company. The operation of both the Majestic and Columbia business organizations, however, will continue without change.



HENRY S. GERSTLÉ, who contributes an article on Nicolai Medtner to this issue, was born in New York City in 1889. He was graduated from Columbia University in 1912 (Bachelor of Science). While at Columbia, he conducted the University Orchestra. He studied piano with Marx and Andrès and composition with Daniel Gregory Mason and Ernest Bloch. He gave up a business career to follow music as a profession, and has at various times been identified with the motion picture industry, assisting in the preparation of musical settings for motion picture feature films. Since 1926, Mr. Gerstlé has been in the Department of Musical Research of the National Broadcasting Company. His compositions include an opera, *Elizabeth* (not yet produced), a Piano Trio in C Minor, orchestral pieces, piano pieces and songs with piano and with string quartet.



The index to Volume II of *Disques*, similar to the one prepared for Volume I, will be issued shortly. Copies may be had from the publishers, the H. Royer Smith Co., at 50c each. Those who wish to have their copies of *Disques* bound can do so through John C. Haynes, bookbinder, 1110 Sansom Street, Philadelphia. The prices for the binding will remain the same as last year: in full green buckram, including index, \$2.25; in one-half black morocco leather, including index, \$3. All copies and remittance in full should be sent to the bookbinder, who will return the bound volumes carriage postpaid. Copies of Volume II already bound can be obtained through the publishers at \$3.75 in full green buckram or at \$4.50 in one-half black morocco leather.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

Subscription price \$1.50 per year (Outside U. S. A., \$2.00 per year). All subscriptions should be sent and all checks drawn to the order of H. Royer Smith Co., 10th and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A. As an index will be published at the end of the year you should specify that your subscription start with the March, 1931, issue (Vol. II, No. 1). Back numbers may be had at 15c each postpaid. Volume I bound with index is available in green buckram, \$3.75 (postpaid); in one-half black morocco, \$4.50 (postpaid). Index to Volume I, 50c (postpaid).

CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, CH-Christschall, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotopia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

Nicolai Medtner

By HENRY S. GERSTLÉ

In company with a half-dozen or so contemporary composers who have given significant musical works to the world, and who have remained comparatively unknown because of their refusal to make concessions to the public, stands Nicolai Medtner, the Russian, whose fine and noble work has unjustly been allowed to remain in obscurity. The unrest and the impetuosity of the world since the outbreak of the Great War have been strongly reflected in the musical taste of this period. Charlatans and mountebanks have sprung up on all sides, using any means at hand for attracting the attention of the gullible public. Their slogan runs something like this: "Do anything that no one has done before, and you'll get talked about. Never mind if you have no real message. Only don't get caught too early at your own game." The musical world (to say nothing of the world of art and literature) has been densely populated with individuals of this type, who imagine that their "different-ness" will brand them as original thinkers, whereas in a couple of years' time they will merely be "old hat." Masterpieces are not built upon such flimsy foundations.

Although working for the most part in the ordinary harmonic idiom as we accept it, Medtner writes music that is original, new and absolutely his own. He seems to belong to a bygone age in musical history—that romantic period when tastes were more discerning and more subtle—but he is definitely not a degeneration of past art. "Modernists" of today do not accept Medtner as a significant figure, lest they be considered hopeless reactionaries, for Medtner has not completely broken with the past.

Although I had known a little about Medtner just previous to the War, my first real acquaintance with his music came in 1917, when I met Alfred Laliberté, pupil of Scriabine, who also knew Medtner. We had several talks about both composers, but it was some time before I was able to value Medtner rightly, so subtle was his art. In the past, new names in music had always piqued my curiosity, but almost without exception they lost interest for me on further acquaintance. In Medtner I found a composer who, like Bach and Brahms, grew on me the more I studied him. I felt that here was a composer who belonged to the great line, who had something to say and who said it in his own way, totally unlike anyone else's. He was almost never played in public, and very little was written about him. The late Oscar Sonneck knew of my enthusiasm for Medtner, and having felt that he should become better known, asked me for an article for the *Musical Quarterly*, which he published in 1924. Although I had become thoroughly saturated with Medtner's music during the intervening years, my article was comparatively reserved in tone; and while I felt that in certain superficial respects he paralleled Brahms, I hesitated to place him in the front rank, despite my enthusiasm. Articles appearing subsequent to mine in various journals have given me the satisfaction one always receives when one finds his opinions corroborated by greater minds.

Among those critics who have been enthusiastic in their praise of Medtner,

sometimes likening him to one or other of the "Three B's," are Ernest Newman, English critic, Oscar von Riesemann, musicologist and biographer of Moussorgsky, Leonid Sabaneiev, Russian composer and writer, Alfred J. Swan and Montagu-Nathan, both authorities on Russian music.

As early as 1915, Mr. Newman wrote in the *Musical Times*: "Already his music is of so fine a quality that no one who wishes to keep abreast of the best activities of the day can afford to neglect it." And when Medtner gave a concert of his own compositions in New York in 1925, Mr. Newman, then critic of the *Evening Post*, wrote: "His music does not make an immediate appeal to the man in the street, but it certainly grows on the musician. It is stark and strong as Brahms at his best; there is never a superfluous bar in it, never a superfluous note in a chord; it is sinewy, athletic, and, for its weight, amazingly flexible, for Medtner is a master of combined and contrasted rhythms. The thought is rarely on the surface, but when one makes it one's own, it is of the kind one likes to live with. It is sad to think of the *réclame* that has come to so many mediocrities and charlatans in the last decade or so, while a fine mind like Medtner's goes on its way almost unregarded by the crowd."

Messrs. Swan and Nathan are equally enthusiastic about Medtner's music. But it is Sabaneiev, pupil of Scriabine and formerly an opponent of Medtner, who now sings his praises in the most lofty manner. Listen to this: "Medtner is the most profound of contemporary composers, and also most perfect in that phase of art which, as the experience of the past shows, is utterly able to withstand the efforts of time. He will survive, therefore, many of those who are now plucking the flowers of fame and are being quoted upon the market as geniuses."

II

Medtner, as may be surmised, is of German parentage, and was born in Moscow on December 24, 1879. He studied with Vassily Safonov at the Moscow Conservatory, and in 1900 he was awarded the Gold Medal. In addition to this, he obtained the Rubinstein prize for piano-playing and began touring Europe as a concert pianist. Later he taught composition at his Alma Mater, continuing in that capacity until the revolution of 1917. For the next five years or so he taught in a school located outside of Moscow, and then began another series of tours. Since then he has been dividing his time between composing and concertizing.

His published compositions consist chiefly of songs, works for piano solo and for violin and piano. Apart from a piano concerto, no larger works have appeared. It is difficult, therefore, to assign him a definite place among his contemporaries, but it may be said without fear of ridicule that his works for piano are not surpassed by those of any living composer, while some of his songs rank with the best of the classical lieder. Upon a foundation of the most extraordinary technical equipment there lies in his music a nobility, a severe grandeur, a rich imagination and beauty possessed by few living writers. He writes with impeccable taste and genuine feeling, and he avoids sentimentality and commonplace. His music reveals a seriousness and high purpose, a passion for perfection. Occasionally his melodies are so obscured by other elements of the music that an inattentive listener may fail to perceive them at all. Thus, on first hearing, his music may seem dry. To

Bruno Walter

By HERBERT F. PEYSER

In a brief volume called "Der Dirigent im XX Jahrhundert," which appeared about six years ago, the late Adolf Weissmann remarked that of all the young conductors who grouped themselves about Gustav Mahler "Bruno Walter is the only Mahler disciple in the literal sense of the word." To many this may seem a curiously wilful appraisal, but it undoubtedly reflects a state of mind that still prevails in Germany. In Bruno Walter's career, Mahler indisputably played a large and determining part. Walter was only eighteen when the older master took him in hand to groom him in the duties of an operatic conductor. Under the same illustrious guidance he ripened in the lyric theatres of Hamburg, Breslau, Pressburg, Riga and Berlin. For eleven years—from 1901 to 1912—he labored at the Vienna Hofoper, the agent, the representative, the fervent intermediary of his mentor. And since those remote and mist-enshrouded days none of the vicissitudes of evil decades have enfeebled the missionary zeal that Bruno Walter brings to the service of Mahler's works. He performs the symphonies or the *Lied von der Erde* as if he were unveiling a sacred chalice. No *Parsifal* presentation was ever fuller of the sense of holy ritual than his performance of the *Song of the Earth*. Yet even with these facts and affiliations in mind I still find it difficult to share Weissmann's assurance of Walter's preëminent discipleship. Indeed, I find marked cleavages and emphatic discrepancies between the interpretative art of Mahler and of Walter. Weissmann accounts for such differences by concluding that the younger man lacks the "dæmonic" that dwelt in the older one. This is unquestionably the truth—and a larger, more embracing and fundamental truth than Herr Weissmann probably intended it to be.



It is a paradox of long standing that the most representative Mahler pupils inherited the mannerisms and the superficialities of their teacher rather than this or that aspect of his greatness. He seems to have diffused something hard and sullen, which communicated itself to the conductorial talents he helped to mold and robbed their musical approach of an essential resiliency, candor and grace. For this reason I have always felt Artur Bodanzky to be a much more typical Mahler pupil than Bruno Walter. Hardness of a kind does, indeed, characterize the conducting of Mr. Walter, but this hardness has always seemed to me the by-product of an inhibition rather than a native element of temperament or a carefully weighed component of an artistic scheme. Bruno Walter is first and last a romanticist. So, too, was Mahler, but his romanticism was of a different stripe. It had nothing like the simplicity of Walter's and in its tortured way it incessantly aspired to issues of great charge. Nevertheless it had a basis of strength. Mr. Walter's has not. There is something almost feminine about his talent, something inescapably sentimental and soft. It is graceful, tender, bewitchingly delicate, this talent—a thing of rounded contours, of suave contacts and mellow lights. But when the impression of strength is needed it has to be simulated. And, as so

often happens when a nature not basically robust labors to exert an illusion of power, the consequence is not a controlled strength but a forthright rudeness. In the conducting of Bruno Walter I am repeatedly conscious of this defect. His *fortissimo* is time and again harsh, raucous, crass. Moreover it is nearly always out of focus with the rest of his dynamic scale. The art of *crescendo*, so masterfully cultivated by Furtwängler, so marvelously consummated by Toscanini, has never been a secret of Walter's. There are times when one can scarcely believe that a conductor capable of such exquisite effects in the lighter dynamic nuances can be guilty of such blatancy in the heavier ones. It is by reason of this tendency that I have never been able wholly to appreciate Walter's performance of Schubert's C Major Symphony which numbers so many staunch admirers.

II

Bruno Walter is not a conductor of what the Germans call large *Format*. I have never cared for his Wagner—not because it does not contain much that is enchanting, but because it lacks correct perspective and dimension. The grace, the delicacy, the continence of which he is capable ought to make him a wholly ideal Mozart interpreter. Yet with all becoming deference to his highly outstanding virtues in the Mozartean province his excellencies even here are circumscribed. Why should he be greater and more memorable in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* (in which, I venture to believe, his only living rival is Toscanini) than, for example, in *The Marriage of Figaro*? For the simple reason that there is a vein of romantic sentimentality streaking the former score that has no place in Mozart's divine comedy. Against those who insist that Walter's special domain is Mozart I always feel like maintaining that it is rather Mendelssohn and Weber. For these two masters, indeed, he is to the very manner born. It is hard to recall a reading of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music that equals, let alone surpasses his. And Weber might have written *Oberon* expressly with a view to Mr. Walter's conducting it. Such music, in its quality of sensuousness, its romantic sentiment, its picture book heroism, its sprightliness and its dreamy fantasy, finds in him its perfectly equipped and balanced expositor.

However, there are singular contradictions and paradoxes in Bruno Walter's artistic makeup. Why should he give so superlative a performance of Gluck's starkly classic *Iphigenia in Aulis* as he did in Munich nine years or so ago and then so thoroughly imperceptive a one of the more romantic *Orfeo* of the same composer as he offered in Salzburg last Summer? Why is he capable of so Dionysiac a reading of the Scherzo of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and so perfectly insensible to the spirituality informing the slow movement of this same work? Why is he sometimes so disappointing in Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony and yet so incredibly satisfying in one of the same master's lesser symphonies? To all these and similar queries the answer might be that Walter's artistic constitution is less definitely integrated and more subject to fluctuations of one sort or another than that of a man like Nikisch, like Mahler, like Muck, like Toscanini. Likewise, that his talents are fundamentally less creative.

Walter is not a conductor whose first consideration is orchestral euphony. He will tolerate, at times, amazing instrumental transgressions. Neither is he a repose-

ful leader. His indwelling sentimentality is visible in his outward demeanor when he directs. Sometimes, indeed, the emotion is more obvious to the eye than to the heart or the intelligence. Unlike Mahler or Nikisch or Muck he finds it difficult to project the emotional or imaginative content of a composition when he concerns himself expressly with its constructive aspects. This is not to say that he slights details. On the contrary, Walter usually treats structural detail with cherishing care. But let him stress, for example, the architecture of the first movement of the Ninth Symphony and a very large part of the mystery, the spiritual agony and the inner drama of the movement proceed incontinently to evaporate. When he secures breadth and sweep of line it is usually at a cost. One has not the secure feeling with him, as one has with a Toscanini or a Mahler, that to his way of thinking form and emotion are inseparably correlated.

However one may estimate Bruno Walter's status there is no question of his rank among the most popular and deeply esteemed conductors of the present age. His vogue in England borders on the sensational. He has contributed richly to the musical life of post-War Germany—more richly, perhaps, than any other conductor but Furtwängler. The Summer festivals in Munich have never recovered the artistic prestige they lost when the Bavarian capital, for unworthy political reasons, dispensed with his services. Those who nowadays attend these festivals with their dreary rehash, year-in, year-out, of the same Wagner and Mozart operas can form no idea of the charm and copious variety that invested these delectable events when, nine and ten years ago, under Bruno Walter's supervision, works by composers as remote from each other and as dissimilar as Handel, Schenck, Pergolesi, Weber, Hugo Wolf and Beethoven commingled in a happy and stimulating confusion.

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(See also British Columbia Catalogue)

Berlioz' "Faust"*

By LAURENCE POWELL

In writing his own *Faust* libretto, Berlioz differs greatly from Goethe in that he centralizes his conception 'round the pictorial rather than 'round the philosophical; in fact, Berlioz does little more than use the *Faust* legend as a peg upon which to hang some highly pictorial music. This led him to contradict Goethe on another point as Berlioz' title would have us suspect. Though Goethe arranges for Faust's ultimate salvation, and obviously had to in view of the character of his hero, earlier versions of the legend, those of the Reformation and just after, invariably damned him for his sensuality. It was obviously going to give Berlioz a much better run for his money to revert to this earlier idea and have Faust damned to all eternity and not only to recount that he was damned but to take all his hearers right into Hell with Faust and Mephistopheles in a hair-raising *Ride to the Abyss* and cap the whole with a *Pandemonium* chorus.

Berlioz' dependence on externals led him to one or two real irrelevancies; he made the *Faust* peg large enough to accommodate anything that he thought might add to the general musical effect. For instance he confessedly sets the soul-weary Faust down on the Plains of Hungary for no other reason than that it would enable him to introduce his famous arrangement of the Hungarian *Racóczy March* for the delectation of his harassed hero. Then later, when Faust gets into Auerbach's Wine Cellar among a crowd of roisterers, Berlioz cannot resist having a smack at his academic enemies in much the same way that Wagner hit his hostile critics through Beckmesser. After Brander has rendered the *Song of the Rat*, Berlioz makes the drunkards sing a most academically stupid fugue on the word Amen—it sounds like the end of a Gloria or Credo from some Cherubini Mass or other. Then, again, there always seems to be a crowd of noisy soldiers and students hanging around Margaret's cottage who have very little to do with the unfolding of the story; they may be there as elements of contrast to the quiet of

* LA DAMNATION DE FAUST: *Dramatic Legend*. (Berlioz) Twenty sides. Mireille Berthon (Soprano), Jose de Trevi (Tenor), Charles Panzera (Baritone), M. Morturier (Bass), Chorale St-Gervais (directed by P. Le Flem) and Members of Padeloup Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Ten 12-inch imported discs (V-L886 to V-L895) in album. \$17.50.

Margaret's room but whatever the reason for their presence, they contribute some fine stuff to the musical end of the entertainment.

None of these apparent irrelevancies should be allowed to stand in the way of a just appreciation of Berlioz' undoubtedly great work, for they are as nothing when compared to the comic opera stuff that crept into Gounod's opera in spite of the composer. Berlioz' characterization of the soul-weary Faust, of the all-powerful and completely domineering Mephisto and of the simple Margaret is comparable in its psychological verity only to the deft character-drawing of the two greatest musico-dramatists, Mozart and Wagner.

The score of Berlioz' *Faust* represents its composer in all his various styles, for we get the pompous Berlioz in the Hungarian March: the adventurous Berlioz in the *Ride to the Abyss* and in some of the underworld music: the poignant Berlioz in Margaret's *Romance*: and we get the dull hum-drum stagey French composer (it is really not Berlioz) in more than one number of this work. It was probably these rather ordinary items, like Mephisto's first aria by the Elbe, that pleased Berlioz' contemporaries, though the orchestration probably made them scratch their heads. Berlioz never wrote more moving music than the haunting strains he gives to the remorseful Margaret at the beginning of Part IV, but her *Ballad of the King of Thule* is somewhat mystifying in the ugliness of the melody and the stodginess of the thick chordal accompaniment. We can only suppose that it was the composer's intention to draw Margaret as a simple servant girl, and this is just about how such a girl would accompany herself on the parlor harmonium. The contrasting unearthly beauty of her second aria, the *Romance*, must be laid down to the effect Faust had on her.

Schumann, baffled by Berlioz, asked: "Are we to regard him as a genius or only as a musical adventurer?" An adequate Twentieth Century reply might be: "It is precisely when Berlioz is an adventurer that he is a genius." Take as a substantiation of this answer the *Ride to the Abyss* with its subtle gallop, the eerie oboe wail, the gorgeous snorting of the hellish monster, the cackling of the infernal fowl and, with it all, the strict preservation of the characters of the two riders, Faust and Mephisto. Taking it all 'round it is precisely the adventuresome music, that of the underworld in general, that keeps Berlioz' Dramatic Legend, *The Damnation of Faust*, alive to-day, as outstanding among the thirty or so musical settings of the legend.

This recording, though not complete, is most certainly to be recommended. If some of the cuts are plausible enough, others are totally incomprehensible: the hackneyed Hungarian March is played in full with all repeats while the *Pandemonium* chorus, which would have been so fine judging by the rest of the male chorus recording, is out. Much of the recitative is also out and therefore most of the explanation of the story. It is a pity that Jose de Trevi as Faust and Mireille Berthon as Margaret conceived the love duet as a battle of vocal power because Berlioz wanted the orchestra to be heard here and marked the voice parts *a mezza voce*. Charles Panzera provides a first-rate unctuous blackguard in his Mephisto, and the orchestra under Piero Coppola gives him every assistance in his machinations.

Some Recent Books on Music and Musicians

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

The letters of great men fall generally into two classes: the routine correspondence through which we all, little or great, proceed on our way to fame or to oblivion, and those exceptional communications that grow out of one's important labors and possess, therefore, an organic relationship to them. Often mediocrity has its fleeting moments of genius, and certainly genius has its more than fleeting moments of mediocrity. Moreover, no genius is a genius twenty-four hours a day. In these days of excessive self-consciousness we are likely—and often there is justification for our attitude—to suspect published letters. In the good old romantic days effusiveness was in the air; people really did set down their hearts on paper. The increasing sophistication of a later age made celebrities more cautious; sometimes it even made them canny. I cannot, for example, believe that the letters of Bernard Shaw to Ellen Terry were written without a suspicion of their eventual publication. But then, Shaw is a constant exception.

This is perhaps a round-about introduction to a couple of volumes of letters that I have enjoyed very much, precisely because they were evidently written in all sincerity, straight from the heart and with no eye cocked in the direction of the publisher. The correspondence of Chopin* is an unending delight alike to one who knows his music very well or one who is interested only in his personality. They are, in fact, a revelation. There are three hundred of them, now for the first time assembled in English. The letters of Giacomo Puccini† are in their way equally interesting because equally revelatory. Puccini dwells under a sort of cloud; Chopin for that matter begins here and there to reveal the ravages of time and to draw forth, from our youngest musical bloods, sounds that are not always complimentary. Yet Chopin represents a high moment in the history of music for the piano. And Puccini, who wrote music as honest as his letters, will be honestly admired as long as his music is heard. Among some modernists, indeed, he has become a minor vogue.

Chopin's collection reveals the tragic genius from the times of his carefree youth until the final horrible moment when, in French, he wrote in pencil his farewell: "As this cough will choke me, I implore you to have my body opened, so that I may not be buried alive." In between are letters notable for vivacious, even ribald, comment upon the eminent musicos of his generation, and upon such salient figures as George Sand. In a word, I cannot imagine anyone with Chopin on his music rack who will not desire to have this beautifully printed book upon his shelves.

Puccini, his life long, was haunted by two spectres: one, the applause of the grand public; the other, the refusal of the high critics to accept him as an artist.

* CHOPIN—COLLECTED LETTERS. Collected by Henryk Opiński. Translated from the original Polish and French with a preface and editorial notes by E. L. Voynich. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$5.

† LETTERS OF GIACOMO PUCCINI. Edited by Giuseppe Adami. Translated from the Italian and edited for the English edition by Ena Makin. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company. \$3.50.

His letters deal almost exclusively with his operas. They are arranged by operas, in fact, so that the chronology is frequently disturbed. None the less, the early struggles of the man and his nagging conscience in the matter of librettos, his varying spirits, are faithfully mirrored and should not fail to attract those with an interest in modern Italian music and in modern biography.

II

Of the eagerly awaited biography* of Sergei Koussevitzky by his friend Arthur Lourié there is unfortunately little that is pleasant to be said. Here was an excellent opportunity that was badly fumbled. Koussevitzky is really a picturesque figure. There will always be differences of opinion as to his standing among the conductors of the day; there will always be caviling at his interpretations of this composer or that; but why, when it comes to conductors, should we expect unimpeachable superlativity? Conductors, recently, have certainly suffered at the hands of their biographers. Consider, for example, what Tobia Nicotra did to Toscanini; consider again what E. R. Sollitt did to Mengelberg. And then weep over what M. Lourié has done to Koussevitzky.

A good part of the trouble is due to some private, quasi-mystical notions that Lourié has about music in general. These occupy, by rapid ocular estimation, about half the book and, like the famous flowers in *The Mikado*, have nothing to do with the case. Koussevitzky, in fact, is often lost amid the verbiage of his biographer's divagations. We get but the merest outline of his career as a poor student, as an emergent virtuoso on the double bass, as a conductor of international renown. His biographer lacks psychological insight; he has no feeling for the development of character; no sense of climax. Koussevitzky suddenly leaps from youth to fame, and the singular process by which he attained eminence is simply disregarded, as if it were not the very essence of the biographer's task.

There are worse faults. All reference to Koussevitzky's racial origin is omitted. This is the more humorless in that Koussevitzky's Jewish parentage is common knowledge, just as is that of M. Lourié. I do not question the right of a man to sign up with any religion of his choice; as far as I'm concerned, all religions are equally irrational, irrelevant and outmoded. But simply as a matter of statistics the race into which a man is born should be set down. To omit reference to it is to commit the blunder of inviting malodorous publicity. Similarly, women are of immense importance in the life of a man; again as a matter of statistics, if the man is to be written about at all, one desires to know at least the lady or ladies that he married. Well, M. Lourié again commits the incredible blunder of omitting all reference to Koussevitzky's first wife and of presenting the present Mrs. Koussevitzky—a woman of remarkable personality—by inference as the only one.

When a man thus plays fast and loose with his material he loses all right to credence. From the way Lourié talks one would imagine that the Boston Symphony Orchestra, when Koussevitzky was invited to take over its conductorship, was dying on its feet, and that subscriptions to the concerts had almost entirely ceased.

* SERGEI KOUSSEVITZKY AND HIS EPOCH: *A Biographical Chronicle*. By Arthur Lourié. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.50.

He is careful to say nothing about the strike under Monteux that was responsible for the temporary disruption of the band. Monteux was an excellent drillmaster, besides being a fine program maker, and at the time of the strike had brought the orchestra up to a creditable degree of proficiency. As for Koussevitzky's seven years in America, Lourié gives us about ten pages. This is really a subtle insult to the orchestra. For, it is during these seven years that Koussevitzky became the conductor he is. Beyond a doubt he fashioned the band into a new skill that it had not known since the days of Muck; but also beyond a doubt he learned things from that self-same band. The crowning indiscretion of Lourié is to present the conductor as a gift of God to the country in which he has earned his highest fame.

As I have said, a really dignified biography could have been written around Koussevitzky. Strangely enough, to have made him more human would have made him more appealing, more exciting. Some day this task will be accomplished, but it will require qualities that M. Lourié lacks—to commit a Hibernian bull—in abundance.

III

When we come to the latest book by Ernest Newman, "Fact and Fiction About Wagner,"* we enter an altogether different atmosphere. Newman, who is not without his pet theories, is at the same time one of the most objective of modern musical critics. By this I mean, among other things, that before he indulges himself in the luxury of expressing an opinion—and opinions are in their very nature subjective—he combs through all the available facts with the grim patience of a historian. The historical element in Newman is, indeed, one of his strongest points as a critic. In him there is none of that airy impressionism which often makes such readable writing, but which just as often makes such hollow criticism.

Newman has done much pioneering in the history of Wagner and of Wagnerian criticism. He has proved himself to be as indefatigable as the proverbial German professor in the tracking down of data; at the same time he commands a prose that, if it is not always exciting or rich in connotation, mirrors admirably the solid qualities of the man's research. Being human, he can be wrong; but his mistakes are never sourced in paucity of facts or haste in investigation.

Around the figures of the great composers it is inevitable that legend should weave its rosy festoons. Something in human nature, when it does not desire to degrade its geniuses, desires to fashion them into superhuman deities. Newman is of those who humanize their subjects not with flippant comment and words of one syllable for an abecedarian public, but by probing deep into the eternally human that is at the base of all greatness.

His new book is dedicated to the proposition that Wagner as a musician was far from being a lonely, despised, rejected genius. He shows that Wagner was early successful in winning the esteem of the grand public, even when the critics were against him. One part of his book is really an excursion into critical sadism. You may have read, or at least heard of, a book published a short time ago under the unfortunate title, "The Truth About Wagner." Newman, as a man of truth,

* FACT AND FICTION ABOUT WAGNER. By Ernest Newman. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$4.

could hardly wait until he got his hands upon the book. I would have given a week's pay to have seen the look on his face after he had brushed the title page aside and entered upon the text. It must have been ghoulishly gleeful. If ever a pretentious, incompetent piece of work received a classic drubbing,—if ever sham and arrogance met their proper fates at the hands of a modern knight—this is the time and this is the place. Newman figuratively—perhaps literally—tears the book to shreds. He leaves hardly a page between the covers. The importance of this sally lies not alone in the exposure of a conscienceless piece of hack work; it should stand as a warning to all who come after.

Newman's correction of popular fallacies about Wagner is too extensive to discuss here in detail. Beyond a question, however, his book is absolutely necessary to any library, however small, that pretends to cover Wagner. It has still another excellent application: every aspiring critic should read it as a suggestion to, and possibly a corrective of, his method and his approach. This is, in the best sense, the spade-work of criticism. Ultimate opinions—if there be such things—belong to æsthetics, which is a much misunderstood pursuit of the emotions and the intellect. But if those opinions are not founded upon all the available data, they are as houses built upon sand.

IV

Paul Bekker's voluminous opus upon Wagner* is already a half a dozen years old. It now appears in a competent English translation. In view of what I have just been saying it seems strange that a critic of Bekker's stamp should openly avow his dependence, for the facts of Wagner's life, upon the work of Glasenapp alone. He believes that for his special purposes biographical detail is secondary and that the music alone is what counts. I don't know how he squares this view with his other one that Wagner's writings were born right out of his life, and that works and life have a peculiarly vital homogeneity. In a word, his criticism, his letters, his operas, his music dramas, his adventures, are all of a piece.

Bekker has another strong theory: that the key to Wagner's life production is the theatre,—the theatre and what Bekker interprets as Expressionism.

Bekker's opus is very long; after explaining his special theory it considers the genesis of Wagner's music for the stage in detail. It would be impossible in the restricted space at my command to go deeply into his point of view. Seeing Wagner as primarily a man of the theatre he sees him also as one to whom music, after all, is but one element in a grandiose unity. Some years ago I myself, seeking an explanation for the Wagnerian leit-motiv, suggested—strange as it may seem—that Wagner was deficient in visual imagination. This may, obliquely, square with some of Bekker's views. Wagner, I thought, in his need to see everything clearly before him, exaggerated the scenic element in his plays to the point sometimes of puerility; the leit-motivs were a similar visualization of his musical process. As I set that down here it seems arbitrary; perhaps I shall return sometime to a fuller consideration of the point.

* RICHARD WAGNER. By Paul Bekker. Translated by M. M. Bozman. New York: *W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.* \$5.

I should say that on the whole Bekker makes out a fairly good case, although certainly he sometimes labors his point. The theory strikes me as a little bit brittle. We are not so optimistic as once we were about explaining genius by a single guiding principle. Perhaps genius is genius because it evades the rubrics that are adequate for the classification of talent and ordinary mortality. We are inclined to read ourselves into the men that we explain. Shaw's Perfect Wagnerite is a treatise on socialist economics; Bekker's Perfect Wagnerite is an essay in philosophy.

The German critic divides Wagner's works into Opera (from the early writings to *Lohengrin* inclusive), Drama (*The Ring*, *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Venusberg*), Play (*The Mastersingers*, *Siegfried Act 3*, *The Dusk of the Gods*) and Sacred Festival Play (*Parsifal*).

This is certainly a book to be read, or rather to be studied; just as certainly one should not expect to read its more than 500 pages at one or two sittings. I should suggest that the preliminary essays be studied first; then the epilogue. After that, the student should proceed opera by opera, returning to any particular work before attending a performance either at the opera house or at the phonograph. Not the least stimulating feature of Bekker's book are the *obiter dicta* generously scattered through his pages. They at once inform the reader and challenge him.

Yeats and "Peter Warlock"*

By JOSEPH COTTLER

To fortify myself against this moment I have been to the libraries to find Peter Warlock, the young English musician, but his thin body of songs was not on the shelves. Instead I have come to know him there as Philip Heseltine, critic and specialist in Elizabethan composers, one whose scholarly writing, insight, and modest enthusiasm have already taught me the genius of John Dowland and the neglect of the precious early English songs.

Heseltine—Peter Warlock—committed suicide. The *Chesterian* theorizes that the exacting critic has murdered the artist (as though one must justify the will to die, and never the fear to die); the *Gramophone*, its pages streaming tears, laments that one so gifted should not have waited . . . People are never so happy as at a send-off of this kind.

I may imagine that when Heseltine, a man of excellent literary taste, was dazzled with some gem of English lyric poetry, he took it to Warlock for musical setting. To the critic's historic sense and to his appreciation of the analogy of the arts, Warlock added a technique gathered from the music-making of the ages. Here, for instance, is *The Curlew*, a striking group of four lyrics by William

* THE CURLEW. (W. B. Yeats—Peter Warlock) John Armstrong (Tenor), R. Murchie (Flute), T. McDonagh (English Horn), and International String Quartet (Mangeot, Price, Bray and Shinebourne) conducted by Constant Lambert. Five sides and (a) SLEEP (from "The Woman Hater," Beaumont and Fletcher, 1607). (b) CHOP CHERRY (from "The Old Wives' Tale," George Peele, 1590). (Peter Warlock) One side. John Armstrong (Tenor) and International String Quartet. Three 12-inch imported discs (G-163 to G-165). \$2 each.

Butler Yeats. It is typical of the Symbolists—direct in expression, portentously mystical, though simple somewhat vague, and hushed by the spell of life in nature's monads. For such an assignment, to the musical translator there is only one resort: the idiom of impressionism (Debussy, yes; but not in the sense of following him. Warlock is rather a user of the master impressionist).

For the supple murmurous background what more suitable than a quartet of strings? The English horn will make the dolorous wail of the curlew, and the flute the cry of the wind. Not that our musician takes the easy way of onomatopoeia, any more than Yeats is interested in the biology of a bird. For all Yeats and Warlock knew, the curlew may be quite pleased with being a curlew. It certainly does not complain about it in tempered intervals. But as figuration, as symbols, the wind and the curlew have to be individuated. Lastly, the words. In the whole scheme this is perhaps the happiest of Warlock's inspirations, to treat the words as comments on the tonal scene, his tenor voice as only part of the instrumentation.

Generally speaking, Warlock conceives a plangent motion from whose midst solo voices start up suddenly (viola, horn, flute, vox humana), rise piercingly in free rhythms and fade away—an atmosphere peopled with ghosts. The third of the four movements is the largest in structure and the most impressive in effect.

The boughs have withered because of the wintry wind.

The boughs have withered because I have told them my dreams.

It tells of sadness and desolation, and its tragic appeal is through simplicity.

. . . blind with wisdom

They have wandered till all the years have gone by.

The setting that Warlock has given the poems is perfect. To put it with some magnificence, had Yeats been given the music first he would have matched it with these very words. Lyrics and music both deal so with intangibles. You ride on the shadow of a moonbeam through the space of atoms drawn past the earth by the faith of the Druids. Well, its rarefaction is even more oppressive.

There is further evidence that Heseltine had rare discrimination, and that is the two small songs on the sixth side. Their lyrics are Elizabethan and Heseltine has invented graceful tunes for them in the English tradition, the first melancholic, the second hearty. But it is because of his accompaniments that I think he would have become, had he not shuffled off his mortal coils, a major name in history of the song.

I have never heard a better recording.



Listen, My Children

By DOROTHY E. NICHOLS

"Listen, my children, and you shall hear," said Longfellow. Like "the play's the thing," the poet's line lifted from its context is weighty with unintentional meaning. It makes a text for these suggestions on the relation of children to music. It is a brief but complete expression of the subject.

A child's approach to any art should be through pleasure. Music as one of the arts was made to be enjoyed. It is a language that speaks to those who hear. To hear one has only to listen. All enjoyment rests on listening. By adding knowledge one can hear with the imagination as well as the ear. By adding technical judgment to knowledge one arrives at another level of enjoyment which is critical. Thus, there are three stages in art appreciation: acquaintance, knowledge, and criticism, but the first of these is acquaintance.

We are always mixing this order. That criticism should come after knowledge is obvious enough, but that appreciation must precede criticism is not always recognized. It is quite all right for the person who has passed through "Puccini rapture" and "Tschaikowsky madness" to observe that Puccini's gayety will not raise your spirits unless they are already gay, or that Tschaikowsky when asked for bread for the soul will give you a stone of self-pity. But for the newcomer in music to talk so is likely to be only a glib repetition of program notes.

Knowledge, the second stage in art appreciation, is regularly made the first. We hear too much about things before we meet the thing. We know which painters are the great ones before we have any personal reaction from their works. We have it pointed out to us why they are good before we feel for ourselves that they are good.

This is the cart before the horse. Natural curiosity will lead us directly to the gathering of facts as soon as we have become vitally interested in a subject. Yet practically all teaching of art appreciation is done in the reverse order. It is so logical, so historical and such a neat way of getting at the subject. (It also is the quickest way to show results.) To the student who is already interested in the art and acquainted with it, such courses are useful, but to the others they have almost no value.

(I think this may be the real explanation of why boys and girls can be exposed to a four-year course in "English" and come out of it with no love of literature, and not a faint glimmering of what poetry is about.)

The defense of this method is the assumption that taste must be taught, and that only by receiving information on the arts can the student be brought to appreciate the merits of the good. The fact that the method does not work seemingly casts no doubt upon its efficacy.

II

Taste is not acquired by knowledge; it can only be checked, defended or bolstered up by it. When Maude Adams first approached pictures she was told to "concentrate on the best and the rest will drop away." We are told by critics, "to acquire a taste for good literature you have only to read it."

Perhaps this is too simple unless it is qualified by the phrase, "in a receptive spirit," for some mature minds hold themselves in rigid defense against the enjoyment of art. The child has no such defense, and childhood is the time for exposure. Children are in our power. They have to concentrate on the best if they are given it.

We know this is true of reading, but we do not apply it as yet to music. It is commonly believed that children who read good books before they are ten can safely be allowed to drift through a *Saturday Evening Post* or even a *Cosmopolitan* stage at fifteen; they will return to literature. Children's books have become important. They are made immensely attractive and the best of writing and drawing goes into them as a matter of course.

We have not given the same thought to the children's music in the home. We have expected them to hear puerile music in childhood and cheap music in adolescence and to begin suddenly to like great music when they arrive at the concert-going age. Then through long years of attendance, those who were interested may acquire taste gradually, while the others are never quite sure they prefer good to what is critically called bad.

We could be excused in the past. Unless parents were accomplished pianists there was no way of bringing music to the pre-concert-age child—at least in the form of pleasure. It came often enough in the form of work. The only way in to the world of music was performance on an instrument. This was a way, of course; better to be able to play the tunes of *Pinafore* on the piano than not to know them at all—but what a revelation the choruses were when we first heard them in an actual performance! Playing is no more an inevitable road to musical appreciation than is writing a composition a sure path to a love of literature.

With the advent of mechanical music, pianolas, player pianos, and the first phonographs, this state of things was changed. Considered at first as an evil because it cast such a blight on home performance, recorded music has opened the doors to the equally important and neglected pleasure of listening. It brings concert music into the home, and thus for the first time, if the parents are sympathetic, to the child.

III

No effort has been made as yet by the phonograph companies to appeal to the child audience—no special albums with bright cloth covers, pictured end papers, no *Hänsel and Gretel* in English for children to follow the story along with the music, no illustrated booklets telling the program fairy tale in large print to let the child know that the music is for his enjoyment. (Especially since we advocate letting the parents handle the records!)

Nor am I so sure that there will be. A correspondent of this magazine writes that a recording company is not issuing certain well-known American works because there is no expressed call for them. It would be odd if a publisher waited until he had had hundreds of inquiries through the book stores for a work on philosophy before accepting Mr. Durant's manuscript.

Meanwhile, there is plenty of music to be tried on the children. Fortunately, we have no music ladders requiring certain works for certain ages, and we are free to range. Schools and groups are using music with the other arts. Puppet

shows are now able to give *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Valkyrie*. The *Sorcerer's Apprentice* is played for the children and they pantomime it with the rhythm of the music. Children's instinctive desire to dance finds happy outlet now that they can be left to themselves with music.

But the age to start listening is lower than we expect. The three-year-old learns to identify tunes in selections from *Hänsel and Gretel* by associating them with characters in the story. Instruments begin to have individuality in the Ravel *Beauty and the Beast*, for when the contra-bassoon makes its appearance in *The Princess of the Pagodas* the child says, "It sounds like a Beast in there." The birds in the Haydn *Toy Symphony* will fix the young child's attention (as will the fascination of the mechanical processes of record changing!). The child likes the words of Gilbert and Sullivan ("Play the cheap-and-chippy-chopper record"), and the orchestral bumps when Siegfried kills the dragon. One child liked Debussy's *Festivals* (pronounced *Vegetables*) because the sound comes nearer and nearer and then goes away. Do not overlook Wagner's story-appeal, or the ballets. When a four-year-old goes about the house humming *Petrouchka* there need be little fear of going over the child's head.

IV

It will be noticed here how often modern music is used. It is likely to have a story, but the reason goes deeper. Modern music holds no terrors for the very young as they have no prejudices, and no training in older forms. And, I think, partly because the chaotic effect that disturbs the older trained mind is common in all music for the beginner. I doubt if the child is capable of following and grasping a composition as a whole, and as this continuity of form is the chief joy of classical music, it may explain why he does not at first respond to the music of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven.

Moreover, the natural starting point for any exploration is the place where you are. Art appreciation begins with your own day. As we penetrate the past each step throws light on the present, bringing contemporaries into proper relation. We come last to what is farthest from us. The process of thinking is from the complexity of observed facts around us to the simplicity of origins.

It is true that the child's development repeats the racial development. The baby likes a rhythm beaten on any resounding surface, the child likes melodies, the adolescent finds the dominant-seventh chord the most ravishing of sounds. But it does not follow that appreciation should begin with a Chinese theatre orchestra, followed with Palestrina chorales, finally arriving at Wagner.

The main thing is to make the child's earliest association with music be that of pleasure in the best there is. If the true religion is taught him before he is five he may revert to the black magic of jazz when he is sixteen, but his musical soul will eventually be saved.



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IMPORTED

DIVERTIMENTO NO. 9 for 8 Wind Instruments. (K. 240)
Two sides. Members of Berlin State Opera Orchestra con-
ducted by Leo Blech. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Few composers were more thoroughly exploited by the phonograph companies during the last year than Mozart. Not only was there the usual quantity of standard releases of his works: *i. e.*, excerpts from his operas, various overtures and orchestral selections and the G Minor Symphony; there were also many more or less unfamiliar works put on records, such as a Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, a Quintet for Wind Instruments and Piano, a flute and several piano concertos, several trios, quartets and quintets, and the *Coronation* and *Requiem* Masses. The *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, of course, is an old story, and there have been plenty of recordings of it since the inception of the electrical process. But the Divertimento for Wind Instruments listed above is not generally known. If the *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* is thoroughly familiar, however, recordings of it as good as this one are certainly not common, and so the set passes the most important test that should be applied to all duplications: *i. e.*, is it better than previous versions? Weissmann, Barbirolli and Fried have all given us recordings of this music; though they have much to commend them, none can be called an outstanding set. Walter's is, and for the usual reasons: thoroughly fine recording combined with a superb interpretation and rendition. This conductor, now in New York directing the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, has been turning out some marvelous recordings of late, as those who are familiar with his versions of the *Rosenkavalier* Waltzes and the *Siegfried Idyl* well know.

The Divertimento given here belongs to a group of ten such works written for various combinations of wind instruments. The one under review dates from 1776, a year which passed quietly for Mozart, though the quantity and quality of his output indicate that he was as busy as usual with his composing. Compositions for wind instruments—then called *harmonie-musik*—were immensely popular in Mozart's day, and that probably accounts for the large number of such works listed in the catalogue of his compositions. "The destination of these trifling pieces, as table-music or such-like," says Jahn in his book on Mozart, "allows neither greatness of conception nor any expression of deep feeling; all must be pleasing, cheerful and quickly over. But Mozart was not content with satisfying these conditions; his *harmonie-musik* is full of delicacy and grace, tender and pure in conception, and touched with the firm hand of a master. The details are carefully and neatly handled, without any exaggeration; little side touches are scattered



freely about—here an imitation, there an original passage or turn in the middle parts, making the whole interesting and full of life; happy instrumental effects abound, and by varied combinations and changes of tone-coloring the outline of the symmetrical structure is thrown into clear relief, in spite of the limited means at command; just as a painter in monochrome shades his one color with such skill as to give a plastic roundness to his forms.”

The label indicates that the Divertimento is for eight wind instruments, but Jahn says it is written for two oboes, two horns and two bassoons. The members of the State Opera, under Dr. Blech, give a skilful performance, and the recording apparently misses nothing.

GOLDMARK

V-7474

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA: *Ballet Music*. Two sides. Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Stock. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Carl Goldmark seems to have gone out of fashion today, and so the list of his recorded works is not an impressively long one. But there are some extremely attractive things on it, and they are well worth investigating. Such works as the *Rustic Wedding* Symphony, the *In Springtime* and *Sakuntala* Overtures (all recorded, appropriately enough, by the fine Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra) and the Entrance March of the Queen of Sheba from the opera *The Queen of Sheba*—such works as these, with their opulent orchestration and wealth of flowing melody, make highly entertaining records. Those who are familiar with Blech's superb recording of the Entrance March will want the Ballet Music from the *Queen of Sheba*, issued this month by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It is delightful music, honest, straightforward, orchestrated with a fine eye for piquant effects, and full of color and unabashed melody. Such music is frowned upon today, but there are still a few stubborn music lovers who are not yet altogether certain that these frowns are entirely well founded, and they will find plenty to reward them in this record. A pleasant 'cello solo, beautifully played, occurs in side two. Stock and his orchestra play the piece with affectionate care, and the recording, like that in the same band's version of Mozart's Symphony in G Minor, is powerful. But here the music can stand the amplified recording, and everything sounds in order.

SCHMAL-STICH

V-EH399

IMPORTED

VERLORENES GLÜCK: *Grosser dramatischer Walzer*. Two sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Frederick Stock, in his Symphonic Waltz issued several months ago by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, gave us his idea of what a waltz should be, and the result was only mildly entertaining. Clemens Schmalstich, already familiar to collectors as a conductor, now tries his hand at the business, and here we have a record of a waltz composed by him. It is no more impressive than the Stock piece. Schmalstich was born at Posen in 1880 and studied composition under Humperdinck. He has conducted many of the records of the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. His waltz is pretty dull, but it is well played and recorded.

ELGAR
V-D1778
IMPORTED

SÉRÉNADE LYRIQUE (*Melodie*). One side and
ROSEMARY (*That's for Remembrance*). One side. New
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Edward Elgar.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.



V-D1863
IMPORTED

MINUET, Op. 21. One side and
FALSTAFF: *Two Interludes*, Op. 68. One side. New Sym-
phony Orchestra conducted by Edward Elgar.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

It is understandable that Sir Edward Elgar should now and then write music such as that contained on the above discs, since, as Cecil Gray points out in his *Contemporary Music*, "these productions have been the means of enabling him to devote himself to the composition of other and better works, undisturbed by material conditions." If, by writing these things, Elgar has been enabled to write the two symphonies no one will much care. But the part that is difficult to understand is that he should go to the trouble of recording them. Duller and triter stuff would be hard to imagine. It makes one rub one's eyes to discover the composer of the two symphonies, the *Enigma* Variations and the Violin Concerto writing such trash and then labelling it *Sérénade Lyrique*. Why the elegant French title? *Rosemary* and the Minuet are both on the same level, but the *Falstaff* Interludes are somewhat better. The recording in both discs, if anyone is interested, is very good.

BACH
C-68013D
to
C-68015D

SUITE NO. 2 in B Minor. Six sides. Amsterdam Concert-
gebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg.
Three 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 168. \$6.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 821.

Columbia lost no time in repressing this beautifully recorded set of Bach's Suite in B Minor for flutes and strings. Mengelberg's reading is rather dull, but otherwise the records are admirably produced and are a credit to both the Columbia recorders and the Amsterdam musicians. The imported pressings of the Suite were reviewed last month on page 496.

SAINT-SAËNS
TITL
C-50313D

THE SWAN. (Saint-Saëns) One side and
SERENADE. (Titl) One side. Columbia Salon Orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Neither of these pieces offers much of interest. The Saint-Saëns trifle, already available in plenty of versions, is insipidly played. As for the Titl Serenade, it is equally banal, and the dreary rendition does nothing to enhance its value. Who is Titl? Baker's mentions an Anton Emil Titl, who was born at Pernstein, Moravia, in 1809, and died in Vienna in 1882. He wrote various operas, incidental music to many plays and a quantity of overtures.



HONEGGER
C-G68018D

RUGBY: Symphonic Movement for Orchestra. Two sides.
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arthur Honegger.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Columbia released Honegger's *Pacific*, 231 a month or two back, and apparently the venture was a successful one, for the *Pacific* affair is now followed by another symphonic movement for orchestra: *Rugby*. Composed in 1928, five years after *Pacific*, *Rugby* sets out, so they say, "to create in terms of pure music an impression of exhilarating speed . . ." *Rugby* was probably as good a title as any to put at the head of the score; and for those who find such things impressive, the composer and an anonymous orchestra boot the piece around with happy violence. The recording, done by French Odeon, is clear, but there is a coarse, hard quality about it that makes it rather trying to listen to. This has been noticeable in most French Odeon recordings of late.

BORODIN
V-11169

IN THE STEPPES OF CENTRAL ASIA. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 833.

LIADOV
V-E565
IMPORTED

KIKIMORA, Op. 63. Two sides. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

The Borodin work is brilliantly played and recorded. It was reviewed, from the H. M. V. pressing, on page 258 of the August, 1931, issue . . . *Kikimora* appears to be the first 10-inch record Albert Coates has made—at least, it's the first we ever came across. *Kikimora* probably is based on some story or other, but what it is we haven't been able to discover. A note by Edwin Evans in the *Musical Mirror and Fanfare* throws some interesting light on the subject. Writing on Liadov's Eight Russian *Fairy Tales* (also recorded by Coates and the London Symphony), Evans says:

They [the *Fairy Tales*] are nothing of the kind. They are eight Russian folk songs arranged for orchestra. But the way the mistake arose is worth telling. Diaghilev had been a pupil of Liadov, whom he always held in the highest esteem. It was Liadov who was first commissioned to write the *Fire Bird*. But his talent always lay in the direction of the miniature, not of the sustained effort, and thus it fell to Stravinsky to write that ballet. But Diaghilev never gave up the idea of having a Liadov ballet in his repertoire, and after the composer's death, which occurred in the first month of the War, he decided to see what could be done with the legacy of miniatures. Among them were three Russian *Fairy Tales*, respectively entitled *Kikimora*, *The Enchanted Lake*, and *Baba-Yaga*. None of the three was long enough for the purpose, but the first and third were otherwise suitable, and, with another of Liadov's compositions substituted for the middle one, supplied the substance of the ballet of *Children's Tales*. It was, however, necessary to link them in some way. So it was decided that the fairy tales should be part of a rustic festival, and that the peasants taking part in it should appear in interludes danced before the drop-scene. For these interludes Diaghilev used most of these eight charming little pieces, slightly varying the tempi of some of them. Being folk songs, they were eminently suited to the purpose, and thus, without being fairy tales, they become incorporated in a fairy-tale ballet.

It is brightly colored music, charmingly played and perfectly recorded.

J. STRAUSS
C-50315D

THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS *Waltz*. Two sides.
Symphony Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.



If you want Felix Weingartner playing Mendelssohn, you have to pay \$2 a record for the privilege, but you can get him playing Johann Strauss for \$1.25 a disc. It is a novel arrangement, but extremely pleasant for Johann's followers, and so it is best not to object, lest he be boosted to the higher-price level, too. The *Thousand and One Nights Waltz*, though a little tame compared to some of the others, has not been worked to death, which is rather an advantage. Its pleasant melodies are admirably played by an anonymous orchestra under Weingartner, and though it lacks the bite and gusto of the same conductor's recent *Voices of Spring*, it is a good record of the waltz. The recording brings out about everything that it could be expected to.

CONCERTO



WEBER
C-2584D

CONCERTO NO. 2 for *Clarinet: Recitative and Polonaise*.
(Weber-Grossin) Two sides. Band of the Garde Republicaine
conducted by Pierre Dupont. Solo Clarinet: M. Verney.
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

This Concerto was written for and dedicated to Heinrich Joseph Baermann (1784-1847), a famed clarinetist and an intimate friend of Mendelssohn and Weber, who both wrote various clarinet pieces for him. The selection recorded above is rather showy and dramatic in character, but it gives M. Verney ample opportunity to display his talents, and those who are fond of the clarinet will enjoy the record.

**RACHMAN-
INOFF**

V-7462
to
V-7466

CONCERTO NO. 3 in *D Minor*, Op. 30. Vladimir Horowitz
(Piano) and London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert
Coates. Nine sides and
PRELUDE in *G Minor*, Op. 23, No. 5. One side. Vladimir
Horowitz (Piano).
Five 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-117. \$10.

With the release of this set, the RCA Victor Company adds another major Rachmaninoff work to the two albums—the Second Concerto and the *Isle of the Dead*—that have already been issued. (Brunswick, of course, has sponsored the recording of the Second Symphony by the Cleveland Orchestra.) The Concerto No. 3 was reviewed from the imported pressings on page 439 of the December, 1931, issue of *Disques*, by Nicolas Slonimsky. Horowitz, incidentally, played this work a few weeks ago with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra in New York.



PIANO

RAVEL

V-DB1533

and

V-DB1534

IMPORTED

SONATINA. Three sides and
JEUX D'EAU. One side. Alfred Cortot (Piano).
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

The Sonatina dates from the years 1903-05; the first movement was written toward the end of 1903 for a competition—subsequently cancelled—established by a magazine. We have had plenty of Ravel discs in the past year or so—ever since, in fact, the *Bolero* recordings began pouring from the pressing machines—but not many have been so thoroughly satisfying and so beautifully turned out as these two records. Written in classical form, the Sonatina is in three movements, the second serving as both a slow movement and a scherzo. Ravel's material is slight, even fragile, but the conciseness and clarity with which he employs it, the deft, expressive touches here and there that lend point and significance to what would otherwise be negligible—all this gives it a delicate and haunting beauty that cannot easily be resisted. The ingenious little Minuet, for example, is particularly charming. Assuming, for the moment, that Ravel's music will outlive him, the Sonatina will probably sound to future generations much as some of Chopin's music sounds to us. Music so delicate and subtle as this calls for a performer of rare talents. Alfred Cortot is such a performer and plays so admirably that it would be difficult to conceive of a player better able to interpret the Sonatina than he. He has given us few phonographic performances more expert.

The *Jeux d'Eau*, considered by some to be Ravel's salient achievement in piano-forte writing, combines the classical form and the modern idiom with delightful effect. A quotation from Henri de Régnier—*Dieu fluvial riant de l'eau qui le chatouille*—serves as a preface to the music. Cortot again gives the impression of being the ideal interpreter of the music, and the recording is well-nigh impeccable, as indeed it is throughout the four sides of the set.

DEBUSSY

C-68019D

ARABESQUES: No. 1—*Andantino con moto*; No. 2—*Allegretto scherzando*. Two sides. Walter Gieseking (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Walter Gieseking is noted for his superb interpretations of Debussy's music, and as his recent Columbia records of Beethoven's Sonata in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2, were magnificently recorded, it is only natural that the present disc should give rise to more than ordinary expectations. It is therefore depressing to have to report that the record is in every respect a great disappointment. The recording is very poor and sounds as if it were done several years ago, when the recording engineers had not yet managed to make piano records sound anything like the original. The tone is pinched and coarse and colorless, wholly unlike that in the Beethoven records. And the interpretation is commonplace and undistinguished and quite unworthy of Gieseking. Perhaps the kindest thing to say would be that the record represents an off-day for both the recorders and the artists.

CHAMBER MUSIC



BEETHOVEN

V-DB1519

and

V-DB1520

IMPORTED

SONATA IN E FLAT MAJOR, Op. 12, No. 3. Four sides.
Adolf Busch (Violin) and Rudolf Serkin (Piano).
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

GEMINIANI VIVALDI

V-DB1524

IMPORTED

SICILIANO. (Geminiani-Arr. Busch) One side and
SUITE IN A. (Vivaldi-Arr. Busch) One side. Adolf Busch
(Violin) with piano accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Adolf Busch, appearing recently with the Philharmonic-Symphony and several other American orchestras, achieved a remarkable success, and so these records come at an especially appropriate time. His triumph, however, was not altogether unexpected, for last Winter he gave us recordings of several Bach sonatas and thus paved the way for the fine impression he subsequently made in person.

The Sonata in E Flat is the third of the series of three that comprise Op. 12. These were published in 1799 and dedicated to Antonio Salieri, a noted dramatic composer of the time, who was Beethoven's friend and teacher. The first Sonata in this group, that in D Major, has been recorded by Yehudi Menuhin and Hubert Giesen and the set was reviewed on page 270 of the September, 1930, issue of *Disques*. These early works belong to Beethoven's first period and so reveal what is generally considered to be the influence of Mozart and Haydn. While they lack the force and majesty, the conviction and unmistakable individuality of his later works, they have a youthful freshness and buoyancy that is immensely charming. The writing for the two instruments is fairly well distributed; in the Sonata in E Flat the piano has a prominent part, and it is deftly balanced with the violin. The work is in three movements, an Allegro con spirito, an Adagio con molt' espressione, and a Rondo. Busch and Serkin play with a forthright spirit and wholesome energy that just fit the music, and the recording, which is unusually kind to Busch's firm, well-rounded tone, is eminently satisfactory.

The Geminiani *Siciliano* is arranged by Busch. Francesco Geminiani (1667-1762) had the distinction of publishing the earliest known violin-method, "Art of Playing the Violin" (1740). He also published works on the art of accompaniment, the art of playing the 'cello, the harpsichord, the guitar and the flute, and a "Treatise on Good Taste." But his work on the violin, "preserving the principles of violin playing as they were finally established by Corelli" (Lawrence Gilman), is deemed the most important. In addition to his literary labors, Geminiani was a noted violinist and composer. The *Siciliano* has a simple, grave beauty that is very appealing. The Vivaldi Suite is also an arrangement by Busch. In five brief movements—Preludio, Capriccio, Corrente, Recitativo, Giga—it is quite attractive, and Busch's fiddling is superb. The piano accompaniment is in competent, if anonymous, hands, and the recording is very good.

**WARLOCK**

G-163

to

G-165

IMPORTED

THE CURLEW. (W. B. Yeats-Peter Warlock) John Armstrong (Tenor), R. Murchie (Flute), T. McDonagh (English Horn), and International String Quartet (Mangeot, Price, Bray and Shinebourne) conducted by Constant Lambert. Five sides and

(a) SLEEP from the "*Woman Hater*," Beaumont and Fletcher, 1607. (b) CHOP CHERRY from "*The Old Wives' Tale*," George Peele, 1590. (Peter Warlock) One side. John Armstrong (Tenor) and International String Quartet. Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Reviewed in the article, "Yeats and 'Peter Warlock,'" printed elsewhere in this issue.

CASELLA

C-GQX10134

IMPORTED

SICILIANA E BURLESCA. Two sides. Alfredo Casella (Piano), A. Poltronieri (Violin), and Arturo Bonucci ('Cello). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Casella himself plays the piano in this recording of his *Siciliana e burlesca*, and thus the disc is an authoritative one. He is ably assisted by Poltronieri (violin) and Bonucci ('cello). The piece dates from 1914 and so falls within what some critics have designated as Casella's second period: that is, the music he wrote between the years 1911 and 1915. It is brilliant and highly entertaining, and Casella obtains some ingenious effects from the three instruments he employs. There are several lively tunes on side two. A score is not available, so that it is impossible to say whether or not the recording is complete. The performance is deft, the recording clean-cut and vivid.

**SCHUBERT
MENDELSSOHN**

V-7475

to

V-7478

QUARTET IN G MAJOR, Op. 161. (Schubert) Seven sides and

QUARTET IN E FLAT MAJOR: *Canzonetta (Allegretto)*. (Mendelssohn) One side. Flonzaley Quartet. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-118. \$8.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 39.

This set, available as an importation for a little over a year, still remains the only recording of Schubert's lovely Quartet in G Major, certainly one of his finest works. It is too bad that the set is marred by numerous brief cuts; they hardly seemed necessary, especially when the eighth side of the album is given over to a movement from Mendelssohn's Quartet in E Flat Major, Op. 12. In some rare cases cuts are half understandable when, by making a brief one, considerable record space and expense can be saved; but in a case like this, where a whole record side is left over, it seems pointless. That, however, is about the most serious criticism that can be made against this otherwise almost flawless album. The Flonzaleys, now disbanded and hence available only on the phonograph, give a distinguished performance, smooth, graceful and perfectly balanced. Better string quartet recording (the present set must have been made several years ago) has

been done—for example, by the Budapest and Léner String Quartets—but there are no major flaws discernible here, and everything is quite satisfactory so far as the reproduction is concerned. The Mendelssohn piece on the odd side is agreeable. The album was reviewed, from the imported pressings, in the January, 1931, issue of *Disques*.



OPERA



MOZART
V-7472

DON GIOVANNI: Act 1—*Batti, batti, O bel Masetto*. One side and
IL RÈ PASTORE: Act 2—*L'Amerò, sarò costante*. One side.
Elisabeth Rethberg (Soprano) with orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The companies have yet to give us any of Mozart's operas in complete form, and in consequence well done excerpts like the above are always welcome, especially when the vocalist is Elisabeth Rethberg, who can generally be depended upon to make the most of her material. *Il rè Pastore* was composed in 1775, when Mozart was only nineteen years old. Another fine recording of this aria, sung by Gabrielle Ritter-Ciampi, was issued by Brunswick over a year ago. In the present disc, Rethberg sings with her customary skill and taste, and she has the assistance of a thoroughly good orchestral accompaniment and very fine recording. In the *Il rè Pastore* selection there is an excellent violin obbligato by Yacob Zayde.

WEINBERGER
B-90213

SCHWANDA, DER DUDELSACKPFEIFER: (a) *Ich bin der Schwanda*. (b) *Wie kann ich denn vergessen, was mein Liebstes war*. Two sides. Theodor Scheidl (Baritone) with orchestra and chorus conducted by Hermann Weigert.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

There have been no less than three orchestral recordings of selections from Weinberger's widely popular *Schwanda*, produced with great success by the Metropolitan last Fall, but this seems to be the first vocal recording. It is admirably done. The average operatic record is commonly a pretty dull thing, but here is one with plenty of freshness and charm. The soloist has an excellent voice, and he is well supported by a large and competent, though anonymous, orchestra. And on the first side there is some distinguished chorus work that the recording brings out vividly. The disc is so good that it arouses a desire for more recordings from the opera. Polydor, the original recorders of the record, could make us all happy by producing an abridged version of the opera, similar to the other abridged operas issued by the German company. Why not? *Schwanda* by now is sufficiently popular to stand such treatment. And there is ample evidence available showing that if the recorders don't soon stir themselves and explore some of the vast quantity of unfamiliar music, they will find the market for their goods growing increasingly smaller.



**PUCCINI
VERDI**

C-G9047M

LA BOHÈME: *On m'appelle Mimi.* (Puccini) One side and
RIGOLETTO: *Air de Gilda—"Ah, ce nom'."* (Verdi) One side.
Lily Pons (Soprano) with orchestra conducted by G. Cloëz.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The *Rigoletto* aria unfortunately has already been recorded—and well recorded—by Mlle. Pons for Victor. The principal difference between the two versions is that in the Victor disc she sings in Italian, while here French is used. The *Bohème* piece, however, has not been done by Mlle. Pons on records before. She sings with her usual grace and charm, and G. Cloëz gives her admirable orchestral support. The recording is very good.

**J. STRAUSS
LEHÁR**

C-G4060M

DER ZIGEUNERBARON: *Als flotter Geist, doch früh ver-
waist* (Johann Strauss) One side and
ZIGEUNERLIEBE: *Und wenn mein Lieb dich mein einziges
Glück.* (Franz Lehár) One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor)
with orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

There ought to be more recordings from Strauss' *The Gypsy Baron*. Outside of the familiar waltz and an odd record or so of selections, nothing much has been recorded from it. Polydor made a good abridged version of *Die Fledermaus*; why not a similar album of *The Gypsy Baron*, only with more music and less dialogue than were given in the former set? The selection sung here by Tauber is delightfully done. The Lehár piece is attractive, too. The orchestral accompaniment is rather coarse, which no doubt is due to the recording.

WAGNER

C-G9049M

(a) **DIE WALKÜRE:** *Du bist der lenz.* (b) **TRISTAN UND
ISOLDE:** *Isolde's Liebestod.* Two sides. Lotte Lehmann
(Soprano) with orchestral accompaniment.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The *Walküre* excerpt occupies part of the first side of the above disc; there is then a brief pause, and the *Tristan* selection follows, continuing on the reverse side of the record. Both pieces are superbly sung, but the small orchestra that accompanies the singer is unable to cope successfully with Wagner's demands. The *Liebestod* has been recorded a great many times, but the only genuinely distinguished version that this reviewer knows of is Wilhelm Furtwängler's magnificent orchestral recording of the piece. This version is well worth hearing, however, for Wagnerian singers of Lotte Lehmann's calibre are not often encountered, and there are no vocal recordings of the *Liebestod* nearly so sensitively and beautifully done as this one. Now that there are plenty of recordings of the familiar Wagnerian excerpts it is high time that the manufacturers let us have some of the unrecorded sections from the *Ring* and *Tristan*.

VOCAL



**MOORE
LIDDLE**
V-1553

THE HARP THAT ONCE THRO' TARA'S HALLS.
(Thomas Moore) One side and
THE GARDEN WHERE THE PRATIES GROW. (Arr.
Liddle) One side. John McCormack (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Edwin Schneider.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**SCHUMANN
SCHUBERT**
V-7473

WANDERLIED. (Schumann) One side and
AM MEER. (Schubert) One side. Friedrich Schorr (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by R. Jager.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

**TOSTI
LEON-
CAVALLO**
C-G9046M

SEHNSUCHT. (Tosti) One side and
ABSCHIED. (Leoncavallo) One side. Richard Tauber (Tenor) with orchestra conducted by Ernst Hauke.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

It would be hard to find three male vocalists more widely popular than the trio listed above. John McCormack's phonograph audience, considerably smaller than it once was, hasn't been served any too well of late, and so news of the release of the above disc should be received with enthusiasm. Both selections are done in McCormack's characteristic manner, and recording and piano accompaniment in each are skilfully managed. . . . Friedrich Schorr's vocal abilities by now are pretty familiar to most of us, and few singers have a finer reputation, or one more honestly earned. Those who haven't had the good fortune to hear him with the Metropolitan have nonetheless been able to obtain an excellent idea of his notably fine characterizations of Wotan and Sachs through the recordings he has made of excerpts from *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, *Die Götterdämmerung*, and *Die Meistersinger*. Most of his phonograph work has thus far been confined to Wagner, so that to hear him in Schumann and Schubert songs is something of a novelty. It is, moreover, a thoroughly pleasurable novelty, for Schorr's superb voice readily lends itself to such music. The Schumann *Wanderer's Song* is dramatically done, but despite its effectiveness one somehow feels as if Schorr hadn't altogether removed himself from the operatic stage; there is more than a slight touch of Wotan in the song as Schorr sings it. The lovely Schubert song is rendered with feeling and in tones of rich, even quality. The recording was apparently done in a hall, but the effect is not displeasing. Dr. Jager supplies good piano accompaniments. . . . A steady stream of Tauber discs has been issuing from Columbia since he appeared in this country, and so his hundreds of admirers over here, now unhappily deprived of his presence, can remedy this in part by listening to his records. The Tosti *Ideale* and the Leoncavallo *Farewell* are here pleasantly set forth.



CHORAL

**NGATA
HILL**
C-DB309
IMPORTED

- MAORI SONG: *The Warriors' Departure (E Pare Ra)*. (A. Ngata) One side and
MAORI SONG: *Maori Love Ditty (Pokarekare)*. (A. Hill) One side. Rotorua Maori Choir of New Zealand.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.

Whether these are folk songs is not made clear by the labels. The principal charm of the disc lies in the very skilful soft singing by the Rotorua Maori Choir. In the lower registers the tone is somewhat coarse and commonplace, but in the upper registers some beautiful effects are obtained.

**MENDELSSOHN
PARRATT**
V-B3731
IMPORTED

- JUDGE ME, O GOD. (Mendelssohn) One side and
GIVE REST, O CHRIST. (Parratt) One side. Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

These are very pious works, and somehow rather insipid. The Mendelssohn, which enjoys the better recording, is of slight interest, and the Parratt number is notable mainly because of the fact that it introduces the work of a composer new to the phonograph. Sir Walter Parratt was born at Huddersfield in 1841 and died at Windsor in 1924. He was an excellent organist and musician, but his compositions are of minor significance. Both of these numbers are sung without accompaniment.

**SCHUBERT
HANDEL**
V-B3754
IMPORTED

- STRIKE YOUR TIMBRELS. (Schubert) One side and
LET THEIR CELESTIAL CONCERTS. (Handel) One side. Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, with organ accompaniment. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

BACH
V-EG1904
IMPORTED

- KOMM SÜSSER TOD. (Bach-arr. Schumann) One side and
WENN ICH EINMAL SOLL SCHEIDEN. One side. Berliner Arztechor conducted by Kurt Singer.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

These are distinguished choral recordings; the music, the recording, and the rendition in every case are excellent. The Schubert and Handel numbers, sung by the Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, are not so well recorded as the Bach selections, nor is the music or singing so good, but nevertheless they are well above the average. . . . The Bach numbers are beautifully sung and recorded. *Komm Süßer Tod*, of course, is thoroughly familiar, but this seems to be the first choral recording of the piece to be issued. For the melody of *Wenn Ich Einmal Soll Scheiden* Bach turned to Hans Leo von Hasler (1564-1612), a celebrated organist and composer, and regarded as one of the fathers of German music.

GREGORIAN
V-AE3302
IMPORTED

KYRIE ("*Altissimus*"). One side and
ALLELUIA-VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS. One side. Gre-
gorian Choir of Montserrat Monastery conducted by David
Pujol. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.



X

**GREGORIAN
RODAMILANS**
V-AE3347
IMPORTED

CONVERTERE (*Gradual*). Gregorian Choir of Montserrat
Monastery conducted by David Pujol. One side and
ROSA VERA. (J. Verdaguer-A. Rodamilans) One side. Mont-
serrat Monastery School conducted by Anselmo Ferrer.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

**VITTORIA
MITTERER**
V-AE2033
IMPORTED

AVE MARIA. (Vittoria) One side and
O SANCTISSIMA. (Mitterer) One side. Montserrat Monas-
tery School conducted by Anselmo Ferrer.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

X

**RODOREDA
NICOLAU**
V-AF164
IMPORTED

VIROLAI. (J. Verdaguer-J. Rodoreda) One side and
SALVE MONTSERRATINA. (Nicolau) One side. Mont-
serrat Monastery Choir conducted by Anselmo Ferrer.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

X

MOYA
V-AB600
IMPORTED

SALVE SOLEMNE. Two sides. Montserrat Monastery Choir
conducted by Anselmo Ferrer. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

CASANOVES
V-AE3277
IMPORTED

BEATA DEI GENITRIX (*18th Century Christmas Respon-
sory*). Two sides. Montserrat Monastery Choir conducted by
Anselmo Ferrer. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

NICOLAU
V-AE3236
IMPORTED

CANÇÓ DELS ESCOLANS. (J. Verdaguer-A. Nicolau) One
side and
ELS SET GOIGS DE NOTRA DONA DE MONTSERRAT
(*14th Century Melody*). One side. Montserrat Monastery
Choir conducted by Anselmo Ferrer. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

**NICOLAU
FRANCK**
V-AE2261
IMPORTED

CANÇÓ DE LA MORENETA. (A. Nicolau) One side and
LA VERGE BRESSANT. (J. Maragall-C. Franck) One side
Montserrat Monastery Choir conducted by Anselmo Ferrer.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

(*Montserrat Album: Six 10-inch and two 12-inch discs; \$11.25.*)

This album contains examples of the various kinds of sacred music used by the
choir of the monastery of Montserrat in Spain. It is very evident that music is
seriously studied at the monastery and with excellent results. The choir is com-



posed of boys and men and their work shows the very wide differences of style of composition available in the liturgical repertory, reflecting as it does the whole recorded history of European music development.

There might be some question as to the judgment displayed in the selection of compositions. The choir is capable of interpreting the masterpieces and the collection could have been made more interesting and significant if the polyphonic period had been more adequately represented.

There are three numbers in Gregorian: the Kyrie "Altissime," from the *Cantus Ad Libitum* of the Vatican Gradual; "Convertere," the Gradual of the sixth Sunday after Pentecost; and the Alleluia verse from the Mass of Pentecost. They are very well done indeed. The rhythm is clear and the long melismatic melodies with their great demand on the breath control of the singers are rendered with a smoothness and mastery of this particular style that make these records easily the best in the album. One wonders why the director saw fit to use an organ accompaniment. These melodies were written long before organs came into common use and were intended to be sung unaccompanied. Nowadays with less expert singers we are compelled to use organ to prevent a constant drop in pitch, to "support the voices." With a highly trained body such as this there would seem to be no necessity for introducing what must be in the nature of the case of a foreign element. An accompaniment, written a thousand years after the period to which the music belongs, adds nothing of any value in itself.

The polyphonic period is represented by a single number, Vittoria's *Ave Maria*. It is well sung by the choir, although the boys' voices seem somewhat shrill. Accuracy of intonation, precision of attack, beauty of phrasing, confidence and ability in handling the contrapuntal intricacies, are all in evidence. On the other side is an example of the nineteenth century German Cecilian school by Mitterer. It is ordinary, good, kapellmeister music. Another of Vittoria's works—especially one of the less well known motets—would have been preferable, if only because Vittoria was a great composer.

Similarly the *Beata Dei Genitrix* has all the earmarks of the eighteenth century and is pretty enough in its way; but it is of a type with which every student of music is familiar. It has no particular musical value and is not characteristic of anything that the choir stands for.

There are two settings of the *Salve Regina* that show what is being done by modern liturgical composers. Nicolau's is for two choirs. One, consisting of men's voices, sings the odd verses in Gregorian, using the version given in the Solesmes books before the appearance of the Vatican Antiphonale; the other, composed of men and boys, sings the even verses in elaborate polyphony, a Gregorian phrase being employed to initiate the contrapuntal treatment. The Gregorian sections are marred by an overloud and wholly unnecessary organ.

The other setting is by Pérez Moya and is written for full choir and organ. The enthusiasm of the performance and the effort to produce a big effect result in a sense of strain which spoils somewhat an otherwise interesting piece of work.

The remaining records reproduce some religious folk music of the province of Catalonia.

JAMES A. BOYLAN

BERLIOZ

V-L886

to

V-L895

IMPORTED

LA DAMNATION DE FAUST: *Dramatic Legend*. Twenty sides. Mireille Berthon (Soprano), Jose de Trevi (Tenor), Charles Panzera (Baritone), M. Morturier (Bass), Chorale St-Gervais (directed by P. Le Flem) and Members of Pasdeloup Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Ten 12-inch discs in album. \$17.50.



Reviewed in the article "Berlioz' 'Faust,'" printed elsewhere in this issue.

ORGAN**PACHELBEL
BUXTEHUDE**

V-FM23

IMPORTED

CHORAL VORSPIELE ZU: (a) *Vom Himmel hoch da komm' ich her*; (b) *Allein Gott in der Höh' sei Ehr.* (Johann Pachelbel) One side and
FUGUE IN F MAJOR. (Dietrich Buxtehude) One side. Karl Matthaei (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Organ recordings of composers before Bach's time are not numerous, and accordingly this disc, setting forth works by Pachelbel and Buxtehude, makes a valuable addition to the catalogues. Johann Pachelbel was born in Nuremberg in 1653. Receiving his first musical instruction from Heinrich Schwemmer, he was appointed court organist at Eisenach in 1677, and subsequently he held similar positions at Erfurt, Stuttgart, Gotha and Nuremberg. He died in 1706. Buxtehude (1637-1707) was a contemporary of Pachelbel's. He has been represented in record catalogues before, but this seems to be Pachelbel's first appearance. Both works are well recorded and played.

KARG-ELERT

V-C2059

IMPORTED

CHORAL IMPROVISATIONS: (a) *In Dulci Jubilo.* (b) *O Heiliger Geist.* Two sides. Herbert Ellingford (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Sigfrid Karg-Elert's real name was Karg, the "Elert" having been added, for unknown reasons, at the suggestion of his concert-agent. Born at Oberndorf-on-Neckar in 1879, he studied at the Leipzig Conservatoire, and later, in 1919, he taught pianoforte, theory and composition there. As a young man he achieved distinction as a pianist, but a meeting with Grieg decided him to turn to composition. His output, of considerable size, includes a great variety of music: over 100 songs, much pianoforte music, chamber music, a symphony, and much music for the organ. Among his works also is a series of studies and pieces written for the "Kunst-Harmonium," an instrument, commonly of two manuals, which is capable of imitating the tone colors of the orchestra. Karg-Elert's work in connection with this instrument led him to study the organ, and he has written many works which rank high among modern organ compositions. Two of his *Sixty-six Choral Improvisations* are here beautifully played by Herbert Ellingford. The record, which introduces Karg-Elert to the phonograph audience, is superbly reproduced and constitutes an eminently worth-while novelty.

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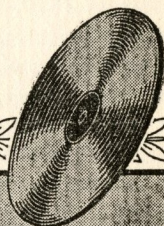
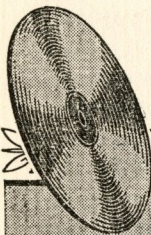
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MISCELLANEOUS



WEISS

V-DB1565
and
V-DA1225

IMPORTED

SUITE IN A MAJOR (17th Century). Four sides. Andres Segovia (Guitar).
One 12-inch disc. \$2. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

It is good to see Andres Segovia's name on the lists once again. First-rate guitar players aren't often encountered, and the opportunity to hear them seldom presents itself. Thus these records have a more than ordinary value. The composer of the Suite given here is, according to the labels, L. S. Weiss. Should this be, instead, S. L. Weiss? Groves mentions a Sylvius Leopold Weiss, who was born at Breslau in 1686 and died in Dresden in 1750. He was considered by Frederick the Great and others to be the greatest lutenist of his time. He was also famous for his art of improvising, and once he even competed with J. S. Bach. He wrote many works for the lute, but not many have survived. Since no available reference work lists an L. S. Weiss, it seems logical to conclude that the label preparers got the initials reversed. At any rate, it is an attractive Suite and consists of five numbers: a Prelude, an Allemande, a Sarabande, a Gavotte and a Gigue. Segovia's skill and musicianship are well-known and need no additional comment. The recording leaves little to be desired.

DESTOUCHES

C-LF75

IMPORTED

TAMBOURIN DU TRIOMPHE. One side and
GAVOTTE DU BOUQUET. One side. La Societe des Instruments Anciens: Henri Casadesus (Viole d'amour), Marius Casadesus (Quinton), Lucette Casadesus (Viole de gambe), Maurice Devilliers (Basse de viole), Regina Patorni-Casadesus (Clavecin). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Notes on Destouches and the Casadesus family will be found on page 132 of the June, 1930, issue of *Disques*. These charming numbers are very lively and gay, and the performances given them are thoroughly delightful. This is easily one of the finest records made by the Casadesus family, and anyone interested in the old instruments and music will succumb to its charms immediately. The recording is excellent.

MOZART

ALBÉNIZ

V-K5984

IMPORTED

MENUET. (Mozart) One side and
SEGUEDILLE. (Albéniz-Dallies) One side. M.-L. Casadesus, M.-T. Jacquot, M. Couée and S. Trivier (Quartet of Chromatic Harps). One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Excellently played and superbly recorded, this is a very pleasant record. The chromatic harp reproduces extraordinarily well; so, too, do four chromatic harps. The players engaged in this recording, obviously thoroughly proficient performers, give just the right daintiness and grace to the Mozart piece and the requisite warmth and color to the Albéniz.

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

—New Issues—

BACH: SUITE NO. 2, IN B MINOR, FOR FLUTES AND STRINGS. This charming suite is prominent among the works which have caused the name of Johann Sebastian Bach to be idolized among lovers of music throughout the world. Written over two centuries ago, it is one of the unique compositions which age renders only the more brilliant. There is a thrill of delight in every measure of the charming polonaise, an entrancing lilt to the rondo, a grave simplicity to the dignified sarabande and minuet, an infectious playfulness in the badinerie, in which the spirit of fun predominates. Seldom have Mengelberg and his great orchestra appeared to better advantage.



Masterworks Set No. 168

Bach: Suite No. 2, in B Minor, for Flutes and Strings. Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra, of Amsterdam. In Six Parts, on Three Twelve-Inch Records. \$6.00 with Album.

MOZART: EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK. SERENADE FOR ORCHESTRA. One of the most delightful works ever written by mortal man is included in our Masterworks list this month. The sheer beauty of this music, which was written in 1787, overwhelms the listener with a feeling which defies analysis. Of the four short movements it is difficult to say which is the happiest. The gay and frolicsome allegro, the ravishing romanza, the stately minuet and the merry rondo are all given their due by Bruno Walter and the excellent orchestra which he conducts.

Mozart: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. Serenade for Orchestra. Bruno Walter and Symphony Orchestra. In Four Parts, on Two Twelve-Inch Records, Nos. 68016-D and 68017-D. Each \$2.00.

HONEGGER: RUGBY—SYMPHONIC MOVEMENT FOR ORCHESTRA. Honegger here personally conducts his famous symphonic impression of a football game. This remarkable symphonic movement, it is understood, seeks to portray not so much the actual incidents of the football field as the state of mind of the player engrossed in the game. This authentic interpretation of the score should stand high among record releases of modernist works.

Honegger: Rugby—Symphonic Movement for Orchestra. Arthur Honegger and Symphony Orchestra. In Two Parts, on One Twelve-Inch Record No. G68018-D†. \$2.00.

DEBUSSY: ARABESQUES, FOR PIANO. Debussy's elusive and exquisite Arabesques are numbered among his early writings but are none the less typical of the personality that dominated the entire field of music during a quarter of a century. With this record Mr. Gieseking continues his triumphant march into the hearts of America's lovers of the best in recorded music, begun in December with his extraordinary recording of the Beethoven D Minor Sonata.

Debussy: Arabesques, for Piano. Walter Gieseking. Record No. 68019-D. 12-inch, \$1.50

† This record is offered for sale in U. S. A. and Canada only



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CORRESPONDENCE



Various Matters

Editor, *Disques*:

Stokowski's extreme slowness in *La Cathédrale Engloutie* has led Mr. Gilbert (Jan., *Disques*, p. 500) into the error of saying that there are repeated measures. Actually, it is played measure for measure as written, with the exception of a small omission of a few notes which are also left out of some of the piano versions. These notes, C and D (two octaves below middle C, measures 70 and 71), are supposed to be repeated alternately twelve times each.* Stokowski omits either eight or twelve of these twenty-four notes—the recording is so muddy I can't be sure which. Mark Hambourg (HMV-C1303) and Arthur Rubenstein (Victor 7427) omit eight of them, but Franz Josef Hirt (Polydor 95134, on the odd side of Liszt's *Funerailles*), plays them all as written. I wonder how Samaroﬀ does it—I haven't her record. This is a minor point, but it would be enlightening to know whether the artists omitted them intentionally, or memorized them imperfectly, or were merely careless. I think an interesting article could be written, by someone with great assiduity and a houseful of piano music, on the recorded deviations of well-known artists from the scores they are playing. I have noticed a number of other such examples myself.

None of your correspondents makes mention of what to me are the two worst features of the long-playing records: horrible surface noise and wobbly pitch. For an example of the former, play the Siegfried Death Music record and try to escape the noise in the pauses at the beginning. It is much worse than in the old record, where it is bad enough. The increased scratch of these new records seems to result from a number of causes: (1) unimproved record material (the ten-inch long-players appear to be of the same stuff as standard Victor records); (2) the need of turning the volume control up to hear the music at a loudness comparable to that of standard records, resulting in amplification of surface noise; (3) the hardness of the chromium needles, which give more scratch on standard records than any other

* Thirteen times, as the pair also occurs once in measure 72.

type; and (4) the fact that in re-recording, you add the scratch of the original record to the natural scratch of the new record. (This last may be wrong—I am only guessing.)

The other matter of pitch-wobble is probably caused by erratic motors in the phonographs. Three of the new machines which I have heard all have this trouble. It is more a trembling than an actual rising and falling of pitch. I have always called the phenomenon "vibraphoning," because it makes a piano record sound like a vibraphone. This phenomenon is usually noticeable in the talkies when a piano is played. Occasionally it happens in the phonograph recording studio: e.g., listen carefully to the Victor records of the Dohnanyi Suite, Wagner's *Träume, Russland und Ludmilla*, and Glazounow's *Pas d'Action* (odd side of Schumann Symphony), all by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the twelve ten-inch records by artists of the Russian Opera Company.

R. F. MCGRAW

Winnetka, Ill.

Not a Cut, But Bad Labelling

Editor, *Disques*:

I have read your magazine with a great deal of interest the past two years and had come to place a great deal of reliance upon your record criticisms. I regret that in the December number of your magazine in your notice of the Columbia Masterworks Set of the Bach transcriptions played by Percy Grainger you make no comment upon the fact that the Bach-Liszt Prelude and Fugue in A minor is mutilated by the omission of the entire conclusion of the fugue. The auditor is left baffled and helpless in the key of E minor some thirty-two or three measures from the end of the work. Surely such an insult to Bach and such a mutilation deserved some criticism.

ARMITT BROWN

Woodbridge, Conn.

The conclusion of the fugue occupies the first part of the first side of the next record in the album—the Fantasia and Fugue in G Minor. The labels do not indicate this.—Ed.

RCA Victor Announces New Musical Masterpieces

Concerto No. 3 in D Minor (opus 30) by Sergei Rachmaninoff. Played by Vladimir Horowitz with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates on five double-faced Victor Records, Nos. 7462-7466 . . . in automatic sequence Nos. 7467-7471. In Album M-117 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$10.00.

If you are one of the many who enjoy the music of Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto, his Third in D Minor will hold even more for you. It keeps the solo instrument well in the foreground with demands of technique and virtuosity that are simply breath-taking.

To Horowitz these technical demands are mere child's play. He makes the notes fairly fly, with a clarity, crispness, and speed that seem almost inhuman. Here's music *par excellence*. Its beauty as a composition . . . the grandeur of its solo performance, which the composer himself has praised highly . . . the brilliance of the recording, will recommend this magnificent album to you.

Quartet in G Major (opus 161) by Franz Schubert. Performed by the Flonzaley Quartet on four double-faced Victor Records, Nos. 7475-7478 . . . in automatic sequence, Nos. 7479-7482. In Album M-118, with explanatory booklet. List price, \$8.00.

This quartet, heard all too seldom on concert programs, will make an entertaining addition to your record library. Its appeal is instantaneous, for it overflows with the kind of melody that makes a bid for repetition . . . and loses none of its charm thereby. The grave beauty of the second movement . . . the lilt of the Trio in the Scherzo . . . the Rossini influence heard in the finale, will prove features of especial interest. Upon the matchless playing of the performing artists comment is superfluous.

RED SEAL RECORDS

The Harp That Once Thro' Tara's Halls and

The Garden Where the Praties Grow.

Sung with piano accompaniment by John McCormack on Victor Record No. 1553. List price, \$1.50.

Cuban Love Song and

Tramps at Sea. Sung by Lawrence Tibbett on Victor Record No. 1550. List price, \$1.50.

In the Steppes of Central Asia (Borodin). Played by Albert Coates and the London Symphony Orchestra on Victor Record No. 11169. List price, \$1.50.

Am Meer (Schubert) and

Wanderlied (Schumann). Sung with piano accompaniment by Friedrich Schorr on Victor Record No. 7473. List price, \$2.00.

Don Giovanni—Batti, batti, o bel Masetto (Mozart) and

Il Rè Pastore—L'Amerò sarò costante (Mozart). Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Elisabeth Rethberg on Victor Record No. 7472. List price, \$2.00.

Queen of Sheba—Ballet Music (Goldmark). Played by Frederick Stock and the Chicago Orchestra on Victor Record 7474. List price, \$2.00.



R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.

Camden, New Jersey

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Correspondence (Continued)

A Statement

Editor, *Disques*:

In view of the uncertainty, which appears to be general, as to what effect the introduction of a long-playing record will have on the talking machine industry, especially with regard to a continued supply of standard speed records in good number and variety, we feel that the trade and the public will be interested in a statement of the Columbia Company's attitude on the subject.

The long-playing record, whatever its ultimate development may be, is not yet commercially practicable or a serious rival of the standard speed record. For a time, probably a long time, the long-playing record will be chiefly useful in the field of classical music, such as symphonies, concertos, sonatas, operatic series, and similar compositions. But even in that field, it is doubtful if it can ever supplant the standard speed record.

There are approximately fifteen million phonographs and combination radio-phonographs in American homes, and all of them are fitted with motors, turntables, tonearms, and other equipment for using the standard speed record. Satisfactory means for adapting or remodeling them to reproduce both long-playing and standard records must be developed, and sold at prices within the reach of people of moderate or even limited means, before any substantial number of owners will become buyers of long-playing records. Most phonograph owners will not regard the possible advantages of a long-playing record as sufficient compensation in itself to justify them in foregoing the enjoyment of the enormous repertoire of selections available on records of the present type. Even assuming the possibility (which is doubtful) of making up combinations of two or more short musical compositions on long-playing discs of such character as would appeal to the tastes of a majority of users, it would take some years to build up an adequate repertoire and to effect its distribution.

By far the greater sale of records, now and for many years past and to come, has been and will be of selections, vocal and instrumental, in the popular classes: dance music; light and tuneful compositions; standard songs and ballads; old-time melodies and familiar tunes; and race and national folk songs, both domestic and in foreign languages,—which do not lend themselves to long play-

ing, or repetition. Selections in these classes will continue to be in greatest demand and must be in such form that users may select the titles they want, without having to take and pay for others they do not want.

We are developing a practical form of long-playing record but, in our judgment, standard speed records will continue to be the most popular and largest selling type of records and Columbia will continue to make them.

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH CO., INC.,

H. C. Cox, *President*

New York, N. Y.

Wagner and the Long-Playing Records

Editor, *Disques*:

In spite of all that may be said against the practice, the theory under which the phonograph companies attempted in 1927 and 1928 to do honor to Beethoven and Schubert was surely a laudable one. That the centennials came along while electrical recording was still in much of a development state could not be helped, although it is true that some of the sets might have been better considered, and either re-done or left unissued for the time being.

The long-playing record is with us. It is still short of perfection, but its problems would appear to be much more closely related to those now practically solved in standard discs, than the problems of these records were to those of the old acoustical ones. The standard record has grown up in a half dozen years. The long-playing record ought to mature in a year.

It *must*. For 1933 will be the fiftieth anniversary of Wagner's death. What a thumping big job will there be then for the long-playing disc! Surely it will not be too much for us to hope for a complete (I mean *complete*) *Ring* for \$50 or \$60. The time will be (has long been) ripe for a *Meistersinger* set. A new *Tristan und Isolde*, perhaps an underwritten *Parsifal*, and some of the lesser operas, including *Der Fliegende Holländer*—all these could be nobly served by perfect renditions upon the perfected long-playing record.

Since Victor as yet appears to have tight hold of the features involved in the new disc, the following is principally for its and HMV's ears. These sets should be uniformly

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Correspondence (Continued)

recorded, *i.e.*, with the same singers, orchestra and conductor throughout each set, and the cast in every case an "all-star" one. Imagine a Melchior and a Leider under a Coates all through *Tristan* at the level of their present love duet records. Schorr, of course, should still thunder through the *Ring* (no lines to be taken by a dead Hunding, either), with Melchior as Siegmund and Siegfried, Leider as Brünnhilde, Ljungberg and Andréén again in the same parts they fill in present albums, and the other singers of a corresponding calibre. It being pretty much of a toss-up between Coates and Blech, let one direct through one set, and the other through another. In short, the Wagner anniversary sets should be unparalleled, as unparalleled as the works they enshrine.

RALPH W. SNYDER

Indianapolis, Ind.

And the Sun Goes Down

Editor, *Disques*:

The sage of Roxbury again has come out of his study long enough to tell us we should become pure musicians. A wonderfully prophetic pronouncement! *Stupendous!*

The reaction from program music, the return to pure music, must have begun at least thirty years ago, when Debussy woke up one morning in the Spring and discovered his hair was getting gray. And between then and now, with increasing rapidity, all the *terrible babies* have abandoned program music. Strauss stumbled upon Mozart's scores one day when he was cleaning out his attic at home, so the story goes. Strawinsky, as usual one step behind Picasso, caught up with the leader by adopting the styles of some of our better bred and more fashionable classic composers. Why, even the old 12-tone messiah, sensing danger, gathered together his brood and gave them a secret bit of advice which they obeyed so well that even *Wozzeck* is full of admirably pointless rondos, variations, sonata-allegros, fugues, canons, etc., etc. Finally, when free verse went out of style, something snapped. Ernest Hemingway joined the Catholic church. T. S. Eliot announced he was a "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion."

If the truth were known, I suppose, we should find out that the best-sellers of the past decade were the Bible, the baroque, Bunyan, and Bach.

Time passes swiftly. Doctor Goldberg will have to run fast to catch up. Before he starts, he might give his colleague, Mr. H. L. Menckén, a dig in the ribs to see if he'll snap out of it. Also, and about as important, he might touch off his friend, "George," that musical escapades in the city of Paris, France (I assure you that I'd have been perfectly willing to take his word for it that he'd been abroad: I shouldn't have required proof even of such an unusual trip as that) (*pardon me, all of youse*), are no longer all the rage, if indeed they ever were.

Mr. Daniel Gregory Mason can well afford to smile at Doctor Goldberg's comically excited gesturing. For the Sage of Roxbury's friends have deserted his side and come over to Mason's side without that other gentleman's noticing it.

C. H. MITCHELL

Chicago, Ill.

An Inquiry

Editor, *Disques*:

I have heard that some special hymn records have been made in Ireland for the International Eucharistic Congress at Dublin in June, 1932. However, I have been unable to obtain any further information about these records and do not even know the name of the manufacturer. Any information you could give me would be appreciated.

L. H. T.

Rochester, N. Y.

The English Columbia Company has recently put out four special hymn records, issued by the authority of the Congress Committee and recorded, by special permission, by the Pro-Cathedral Choir in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin, under the direction of Vincent O'Brien. They were made so that the Irish people can learn the hymns that will be sung during the Congress next June. The records are all 10-inch (\$1 each) and they are numbered C-DB580 to C-DB583, inclusive. The selections are: *God Bless Our Pope (Full in the Panting Heart of Rome)* and *Hail, Glorious St. Patrick* (C-DB580); *Soul of My Saviour* and *Holy God* (C-DB581); *Sweet Heart of Jesus and Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All* (C-DB582); *Come, O Creator* and *To Jesus' Heart All Burning* (C-DB583).—Ed.

BOOKS

SYMPHONIC BROADCASTS. By Olin Downes. New York: *Lincoln MacVeagh (The Dial Press)*. \$2.50.

One of the things that make it decidedly worth while to own a good radio set are the admirable broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra every Sunday afternoon, when the entire program as given in Carnegie Hall is carried throughout the country over the Columbia Broadcasting System. During the intermission at these concerts, instead of the customary sales-talk by some advertiser eager to spoil the effect of the music, the microphone is handed over to Mr. Olin Downes, music critic to the New York *Times*, who thereupon proceeds to discuss the works given on the program. Mr. Downes has planned these talks skilfully. On the one hand, they are not so simple and elementary as to bore those listeners who are already acquainted with the music; on the other, they are not so recondite as to alarm the beginner. Striking a happy medium, they neither insult the intelligence nor tax it unduly. Quite unexpectedly, Mr. Downes' remarks, "conducted from a spot just back of the long red curtain at the right of the stage of Carnegie Hall, within hearing of the bustle and stir of the audience during the intermission, the babble of talk, the tuning of the violins," turned out to be immensely popular.

Requests began pouring in for printed copies of the talks, and as none were available, the present book, "Symphonic Broadcasts," was published to take their place. The volume is, in essence, a collection and amplification of the talks Mr. Downes delivered last year. Each chapter deals with a different program, and over a hundred representative works are discussed. The book is written in a pleasant, untechnical manner. Though Mr. Downes frankly confesses that he has felt the "crushing realization of the inadequacy of words, unaided by an orchestra at hand to make real and vivid the significance of the music," he nevertheless believes that "often a chance remark, or a sentence read, is sufficient to connect music and imagination, and that once such a relation is established between an individual and a masterpiece the rest quickly follows."

"Symphonic Broadcasts," with its abundance of interesting and reliable information, will be welcomed by those who strive to get the most out of their radios, and it is also to be recommended to record collectors. With very few exceptions, the works that Mr. Downes discusses have been recorded, and anybody who has been a diligent collector of phonograph records for any length of time will find relevant notes on the vast majority of the compositions represented in his library. The book serves for the radio and phonograph listener the same purpose the program notes do for the concert-goer.

THE LISTENER'S HISTORY OF MUSIC. By Percy A. Scholes. London: *Oxford University Press*. \$6.50.

Mr. Scholes' qualifications for writing such a book as this one are well known. Few critics have done more toward bringing music within the range of the plain man than he, and in his efforts to popularize music he has used about every plan conceivable. His latest method utilized phonograph records, and the admirable *Columbia History of Music by Ear and Eye* (the first two volumes have been issued, and a review of them can be found in the September, 1931, issue of *Disques*) was the result, or, more properly, will be when the series is completed. This bulky volume, subtitled "A Book for any Concert-goer, Pianolist or Gramophonist," comprises the three volumes "To Beethoven," "The Romantic and Nationalist Schools of the Nineteenth Century," and "To the Composers of Today," all very conveniently bound in one. A comprehensive index is included, making the work useful for reference purposes. One may quarrel here and there with the space, or lack of it, that Mr. Scholes allots to certain composers, but such shortcomings are to be expected in a work planned on such an ambitious scale; and at any rate such defects as are evident in the book are minor ones and do not seriously interfere with its main purpose, which is to inform and interest the listener. There are also incidental notes by Sir W. Henry Hadow, Sir Richard Terry, Dr. Ernest Walker and Edwin Evans. The book is published in England, but it is available in America through Carl Fischer, Inc., New York.

